

My Solo Exchange Diary 2

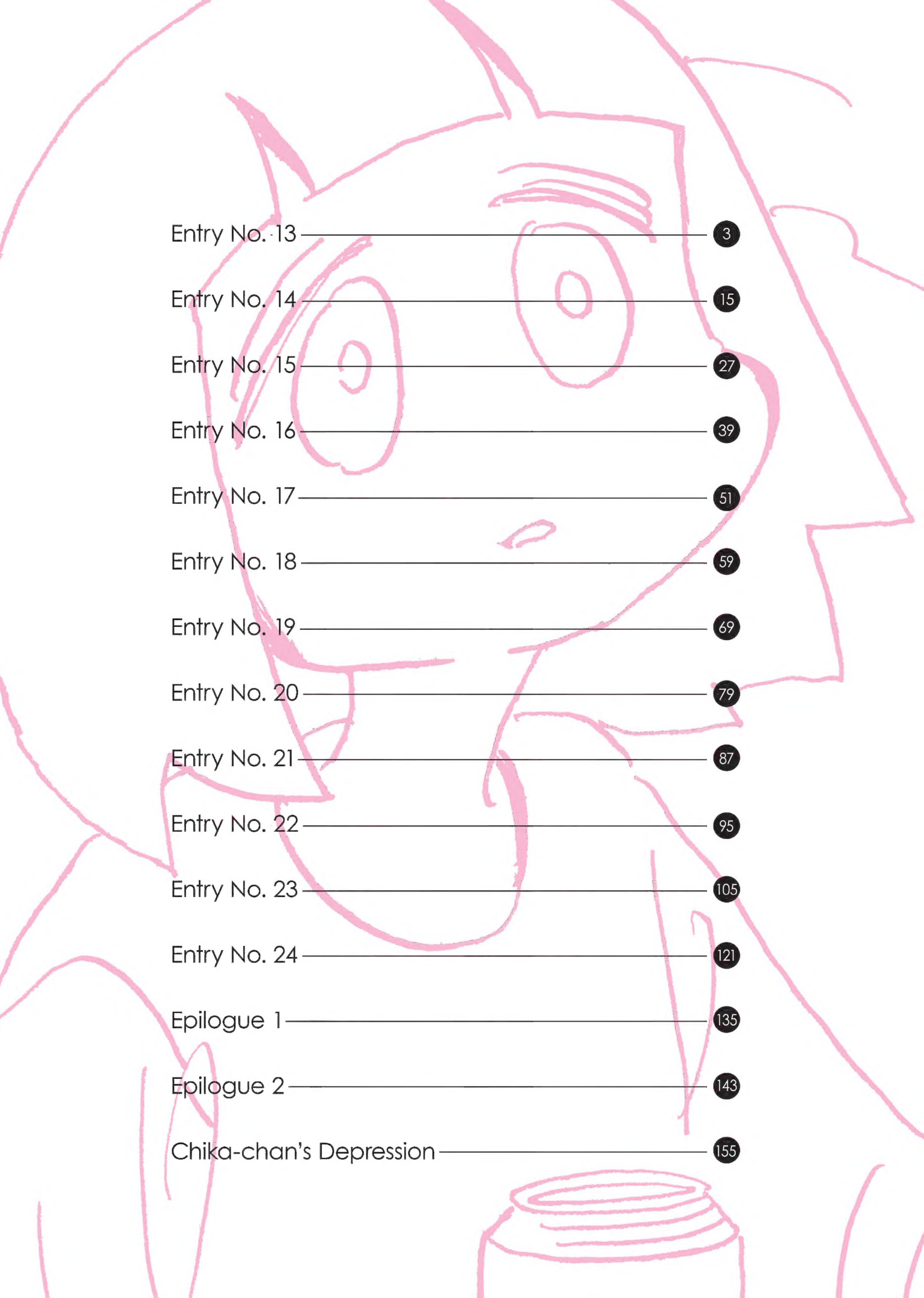
The sequel to
My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness



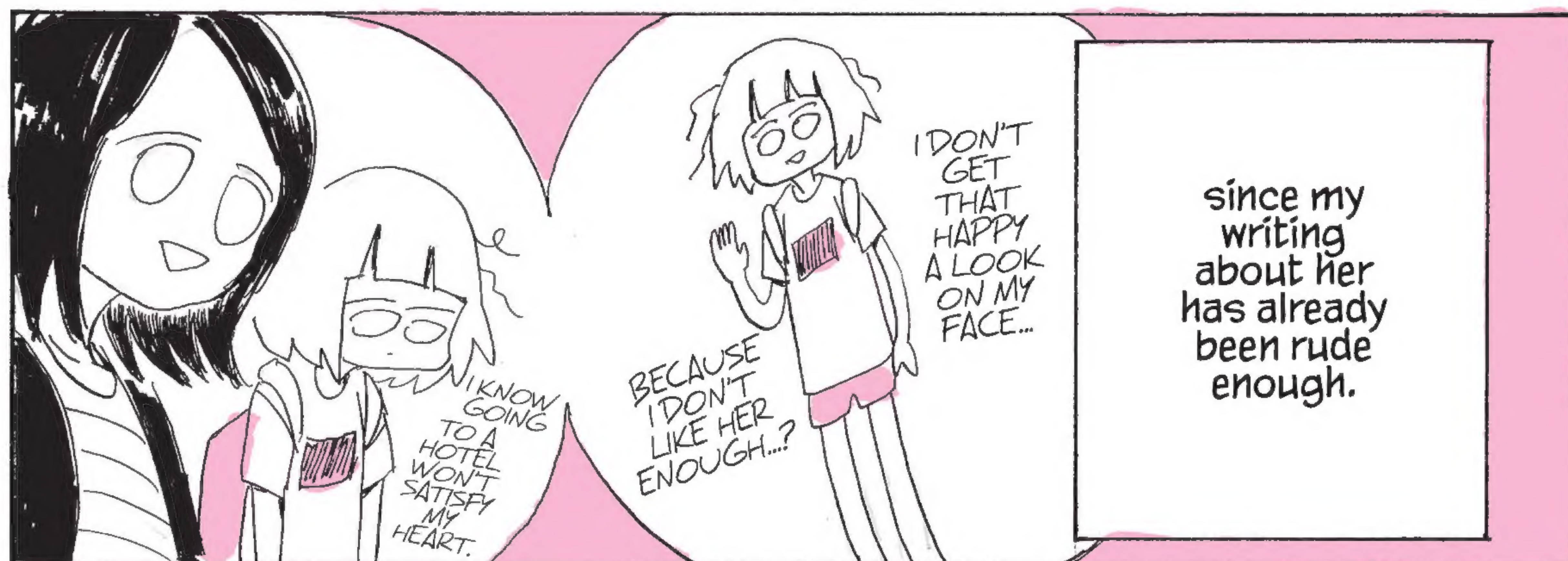
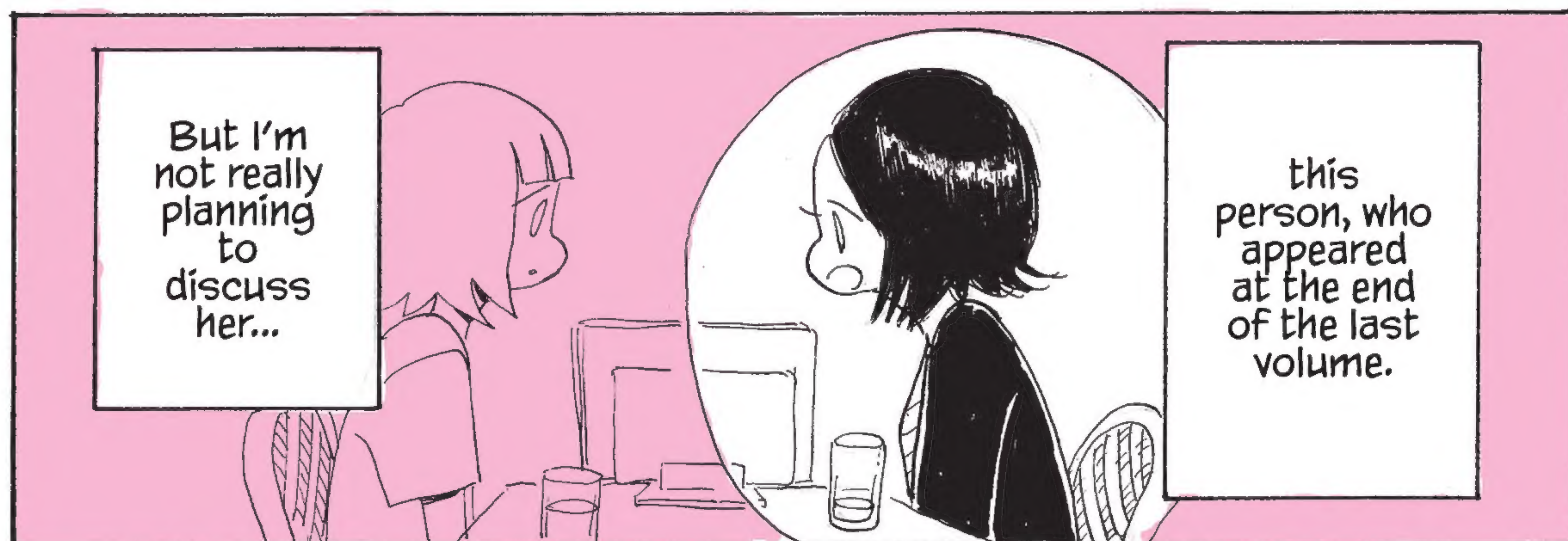
(True) Story & Art by
Nagata Kabi

My Solo Exchange Diary 2

(true) story & art
Nagata Kabi



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And I know
I'll only be
able to write
more rude
stuff if I
continue
to talk
about her.



That
was
kind
of
her.

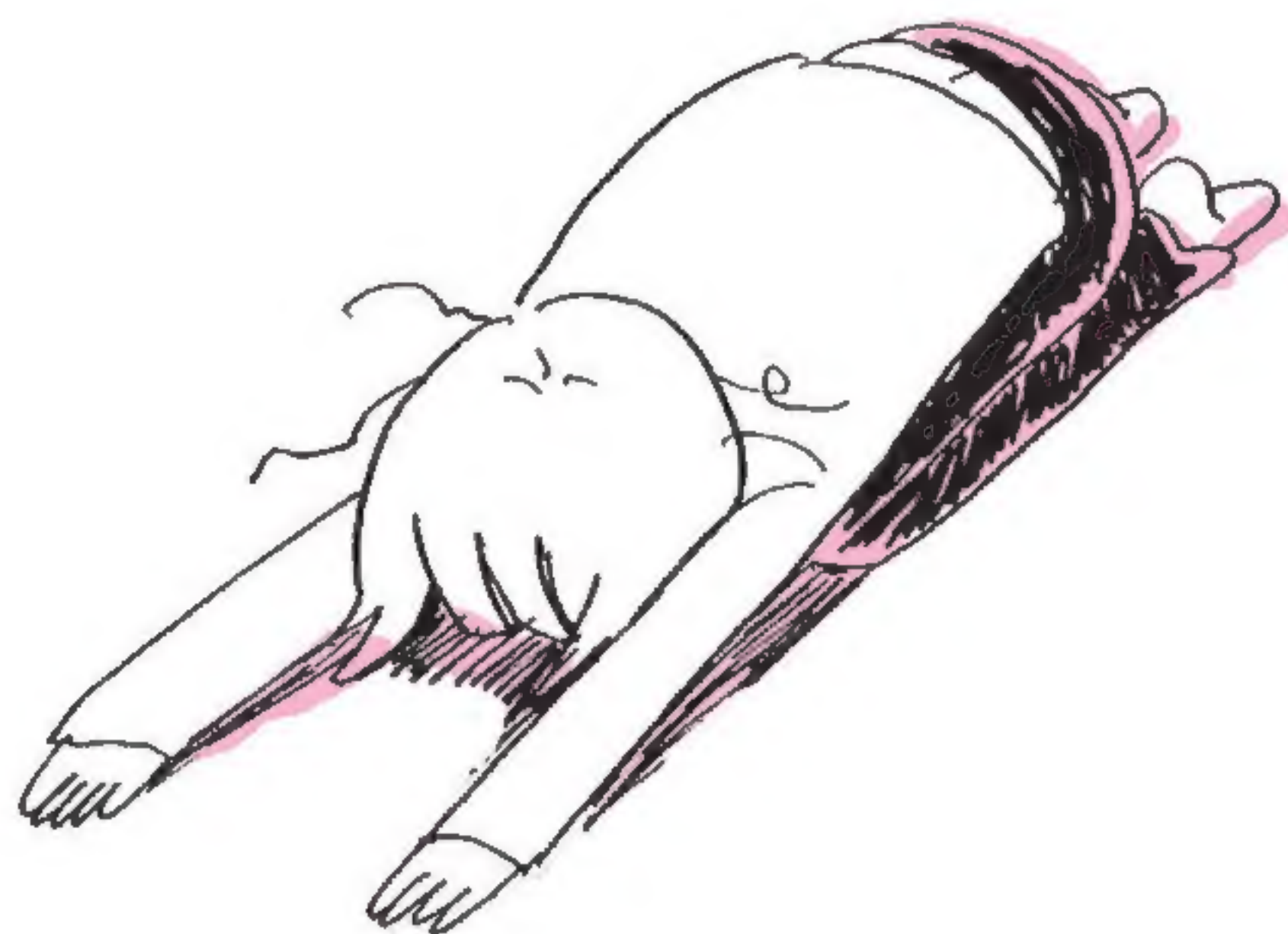


I'm fine with any
relationship. I
don't want to
push you.

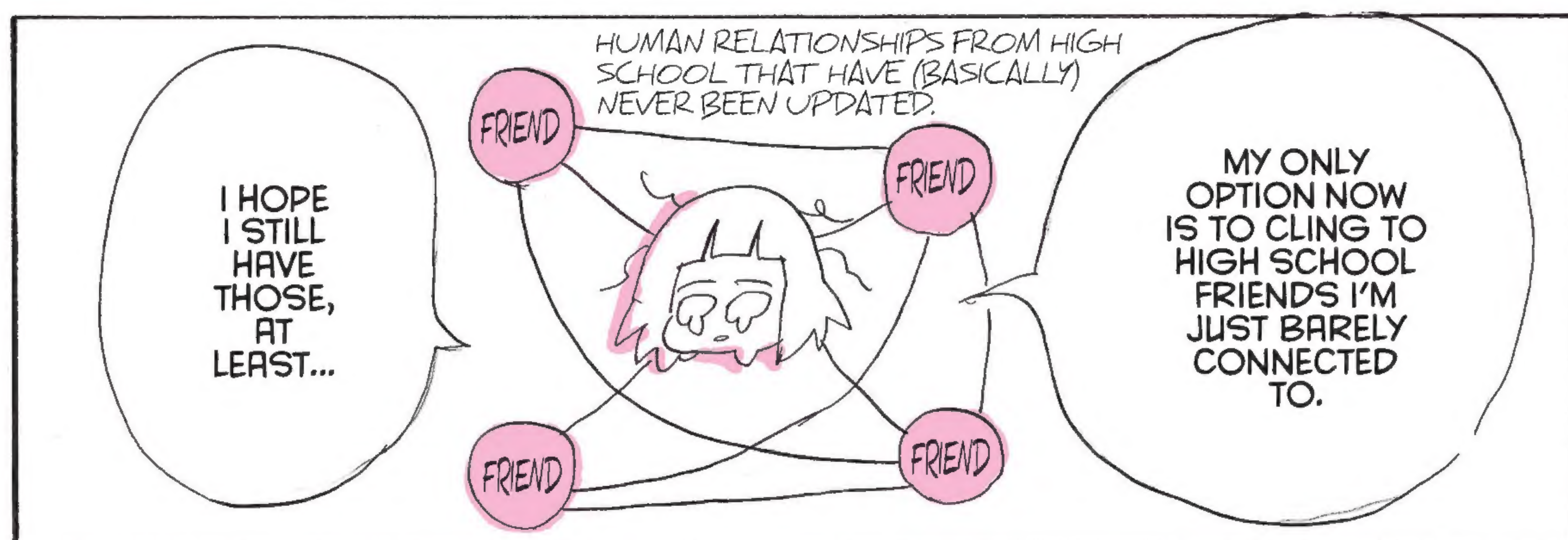
She
told
me...



We
haven't
talked or
met up or
anything.



To her,
and to all of
you cheering
us on and
celebrating
for me...
I'm so
sorry.

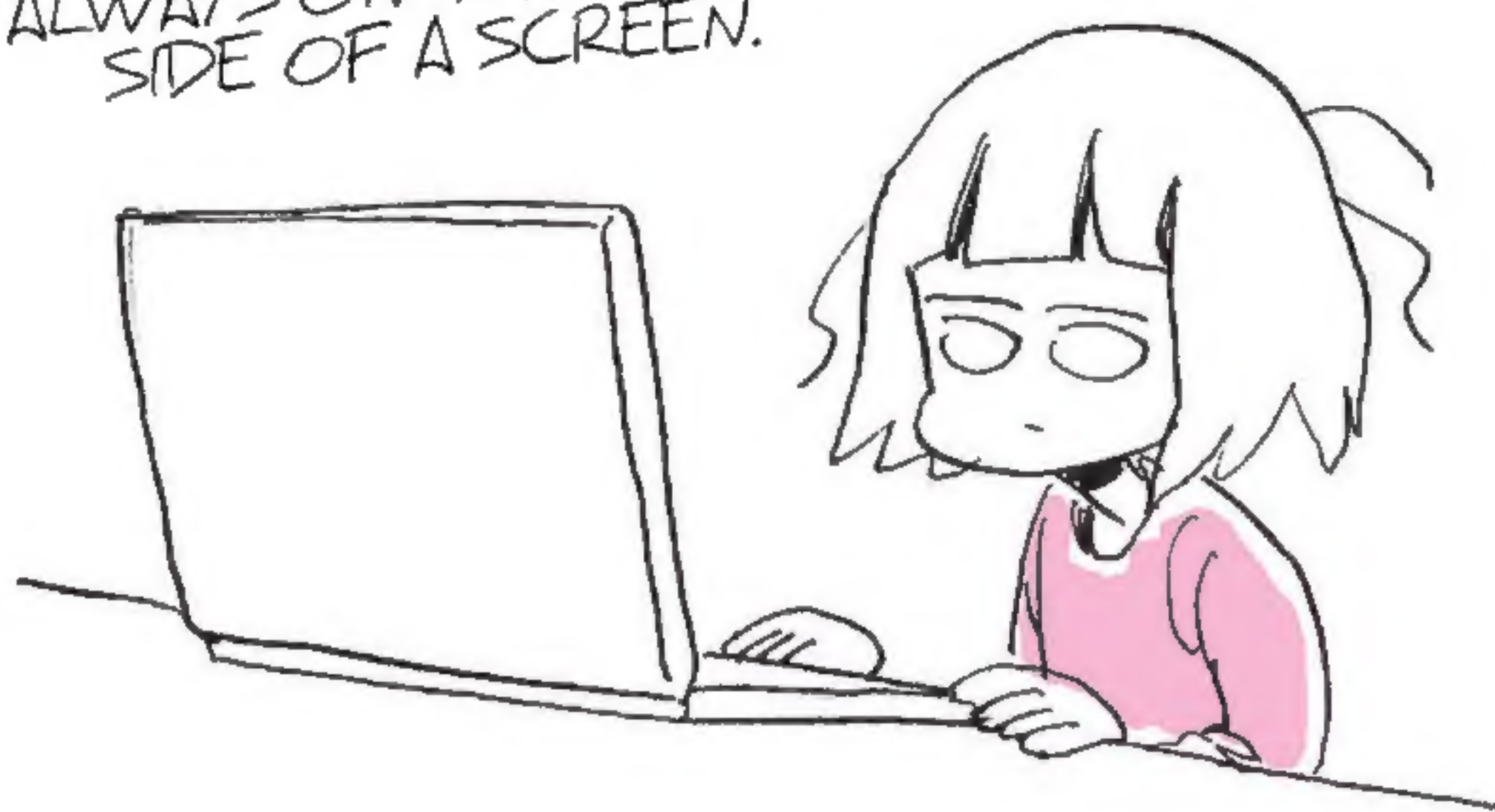


I did
make
a new
friend.

I
managed
it
some-
how.

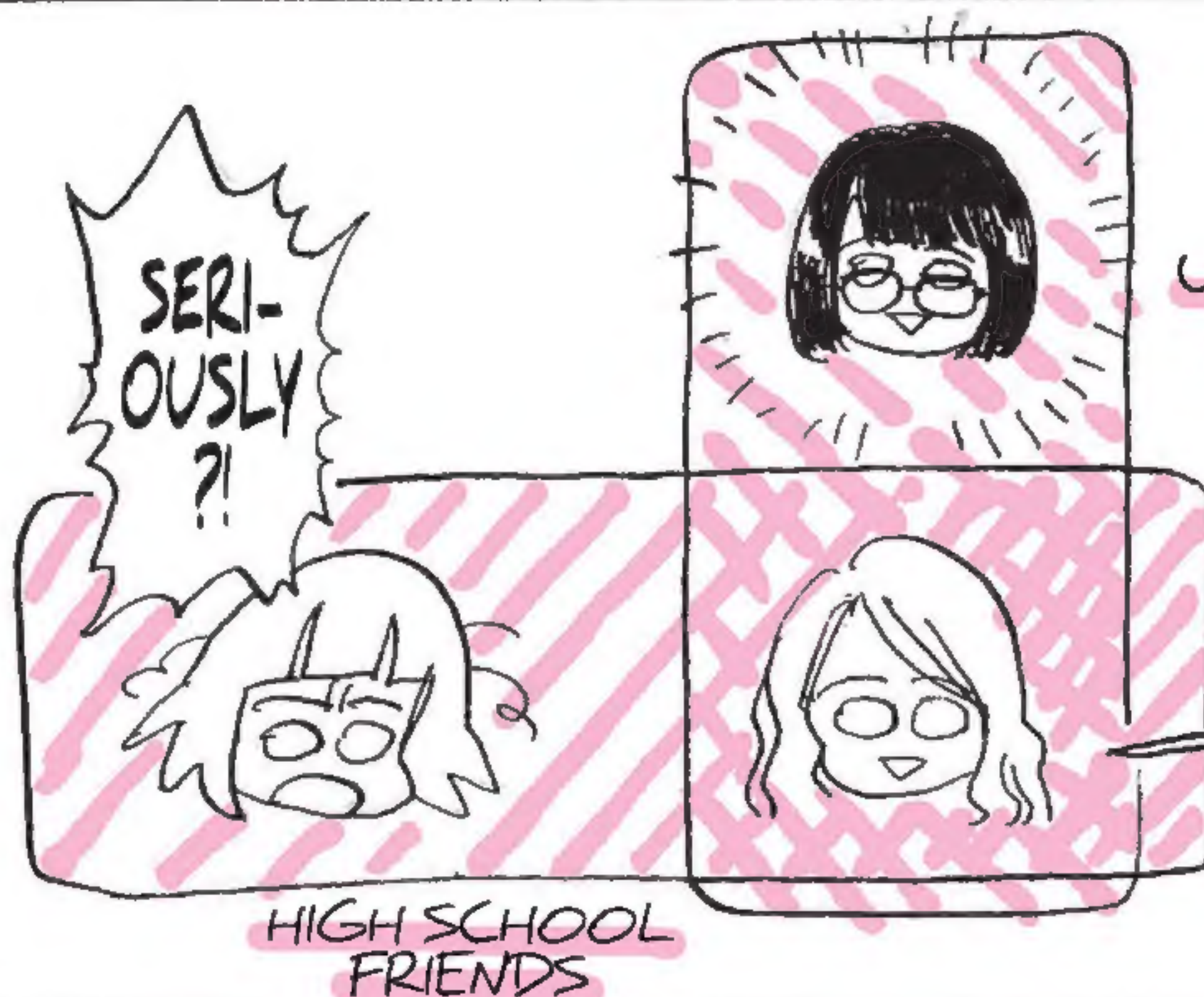


ALWAYS ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF A SCREEN.



I've seen
her
online
for a
few years
now.

One day,
I found
out she
was a
friend
of a
friend.



YEAH,
SHE'S A
BUDDY OF
MINE.

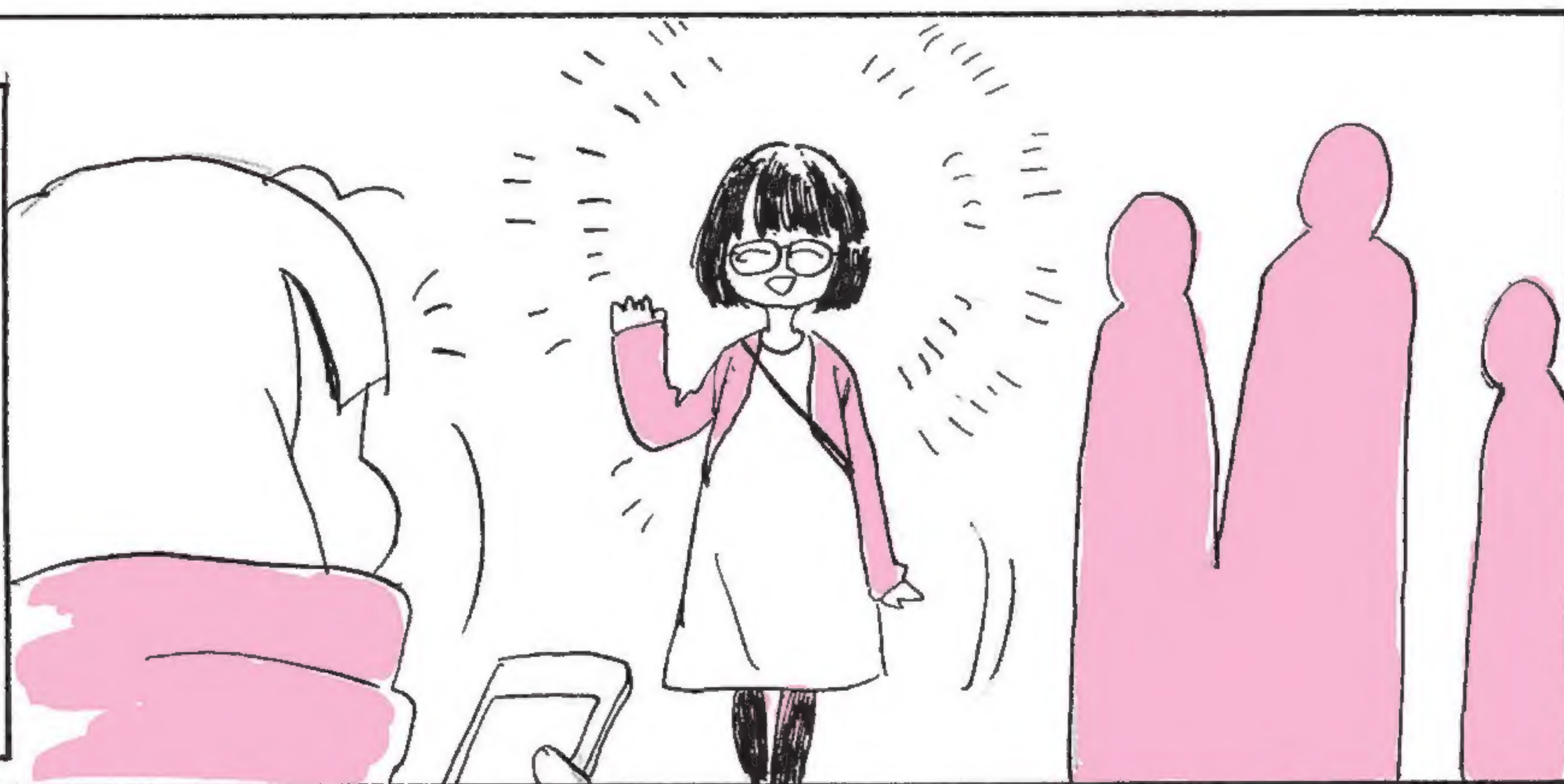


FIDGET

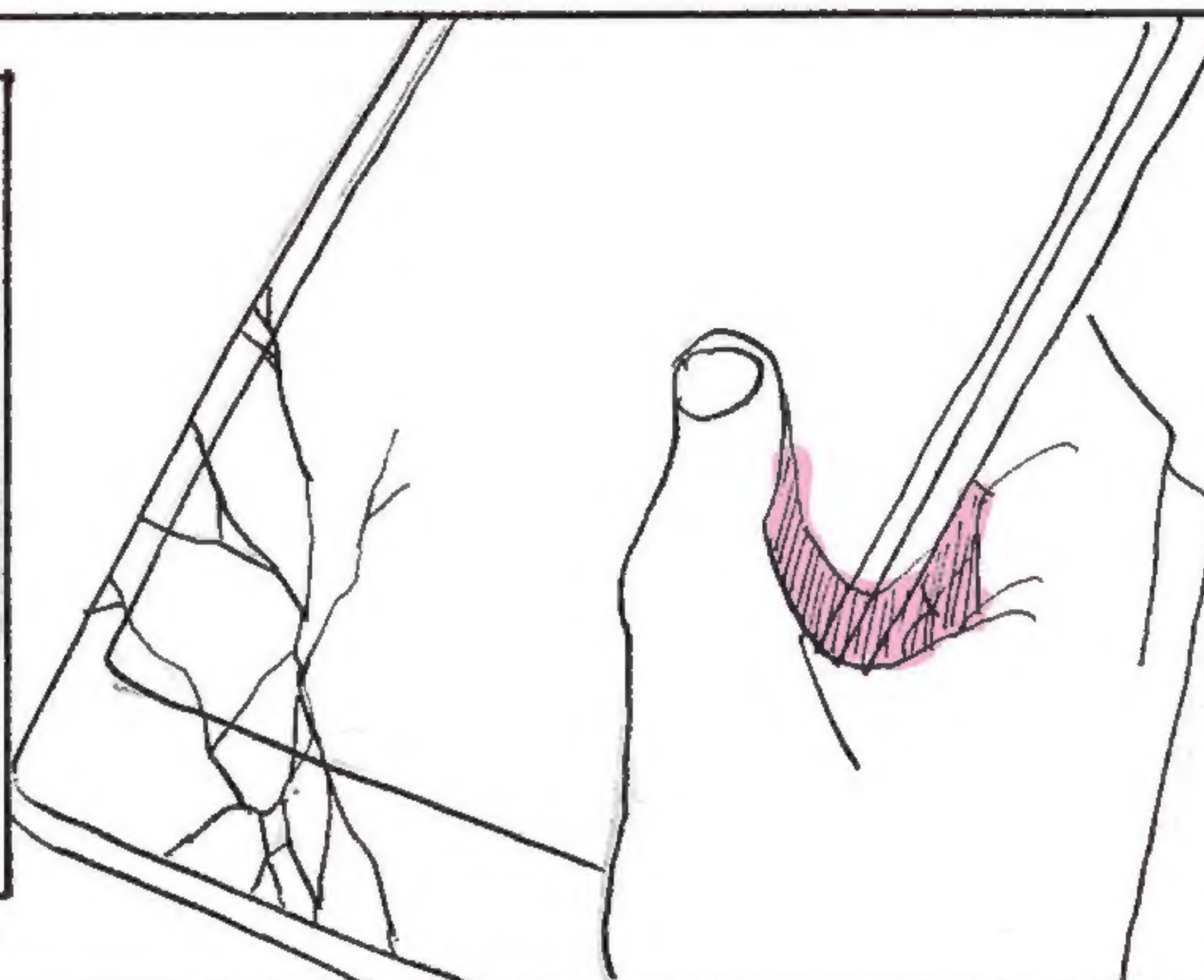
FIDGET

We emailed
each other
a few times
and then
eventually
met up.

Even though she was pregnant, she came to the station closest to me.



My phone broke a lot back then--that was the third time that year.



Oh, and my phone was all smashed up when we met.

I felt like an idiot, and couldn't bring myself to fix it.



The screen had cracked from me biting it while screeching "Eeeee!!"

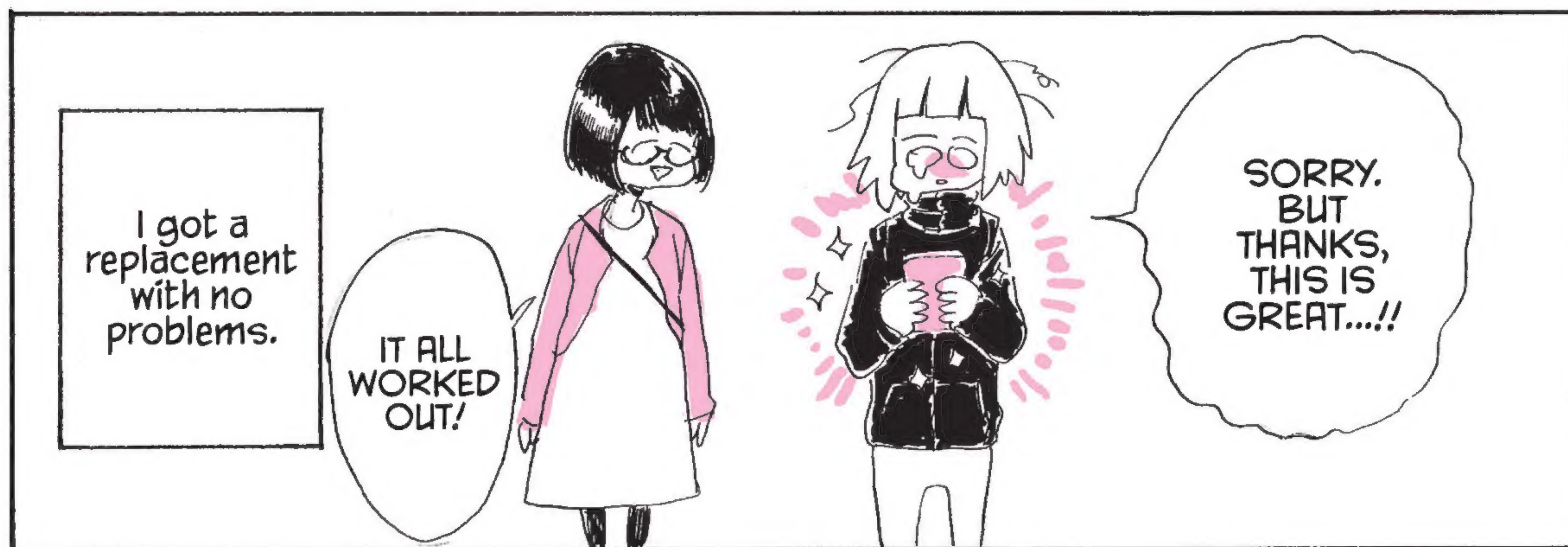
I'LL FIND A PLACE.

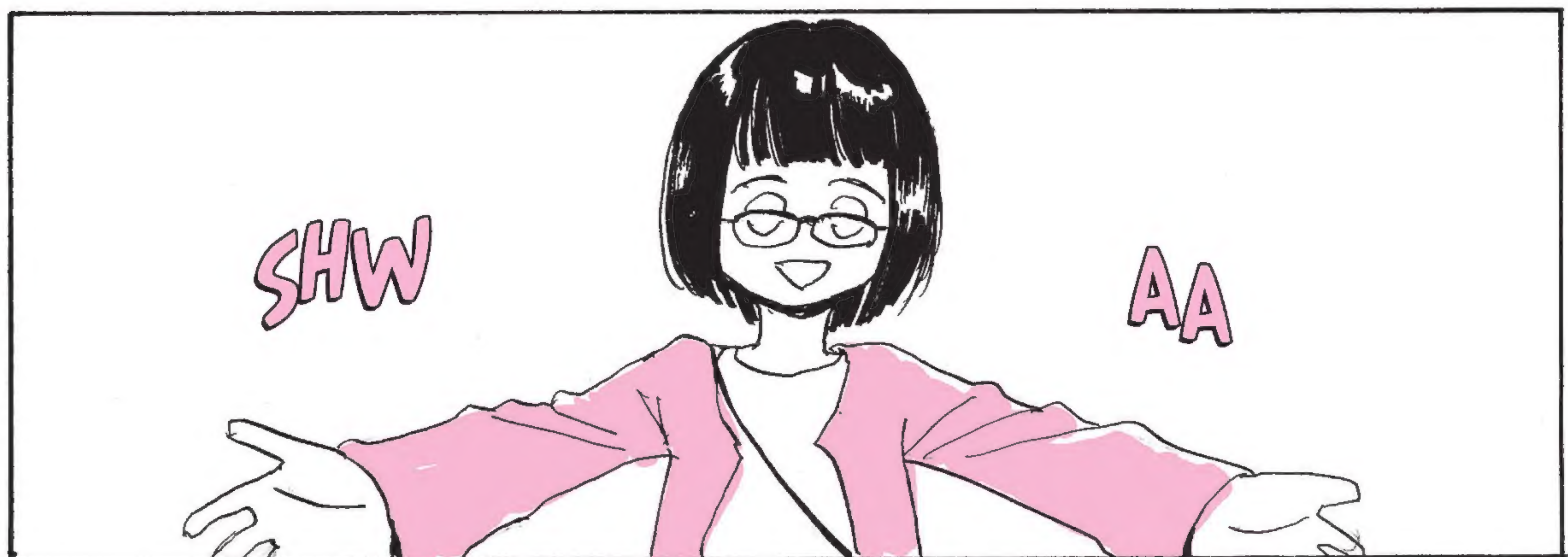
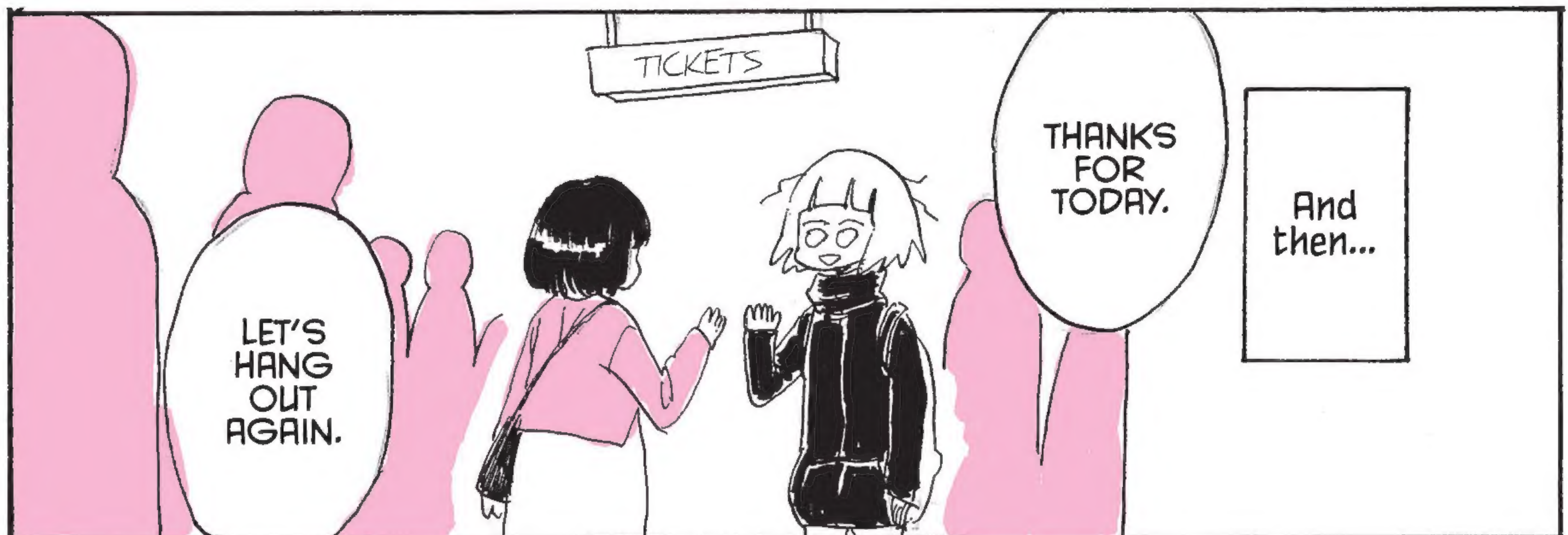
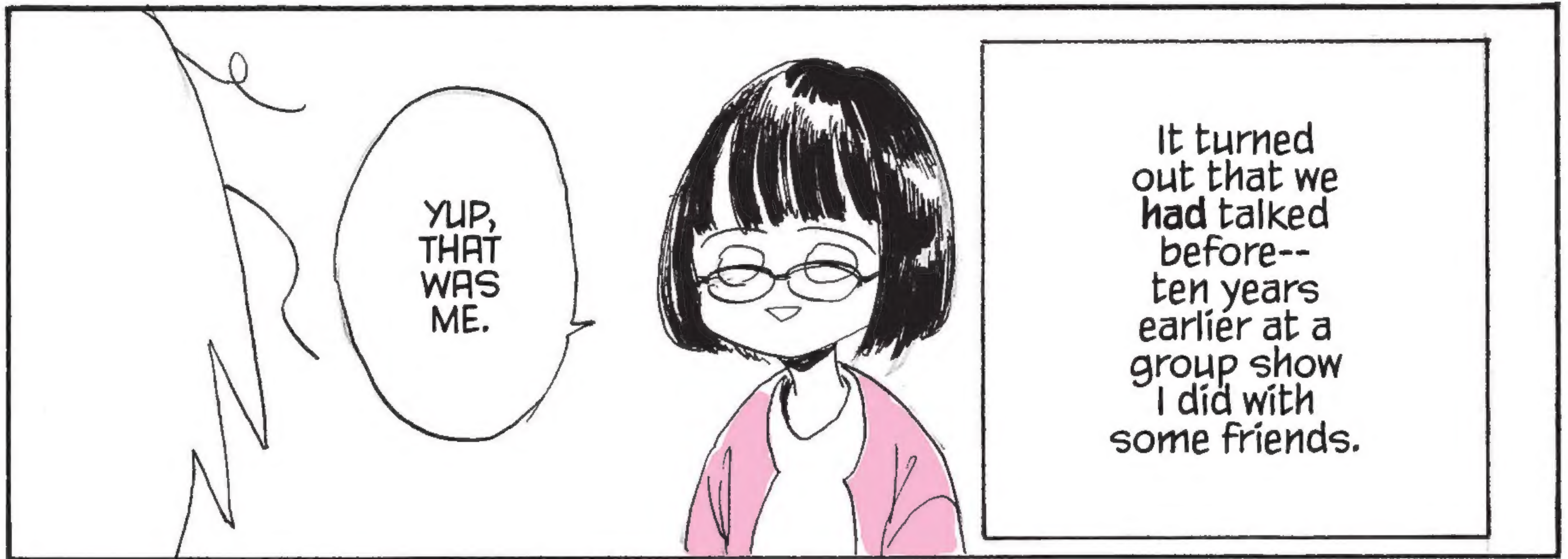


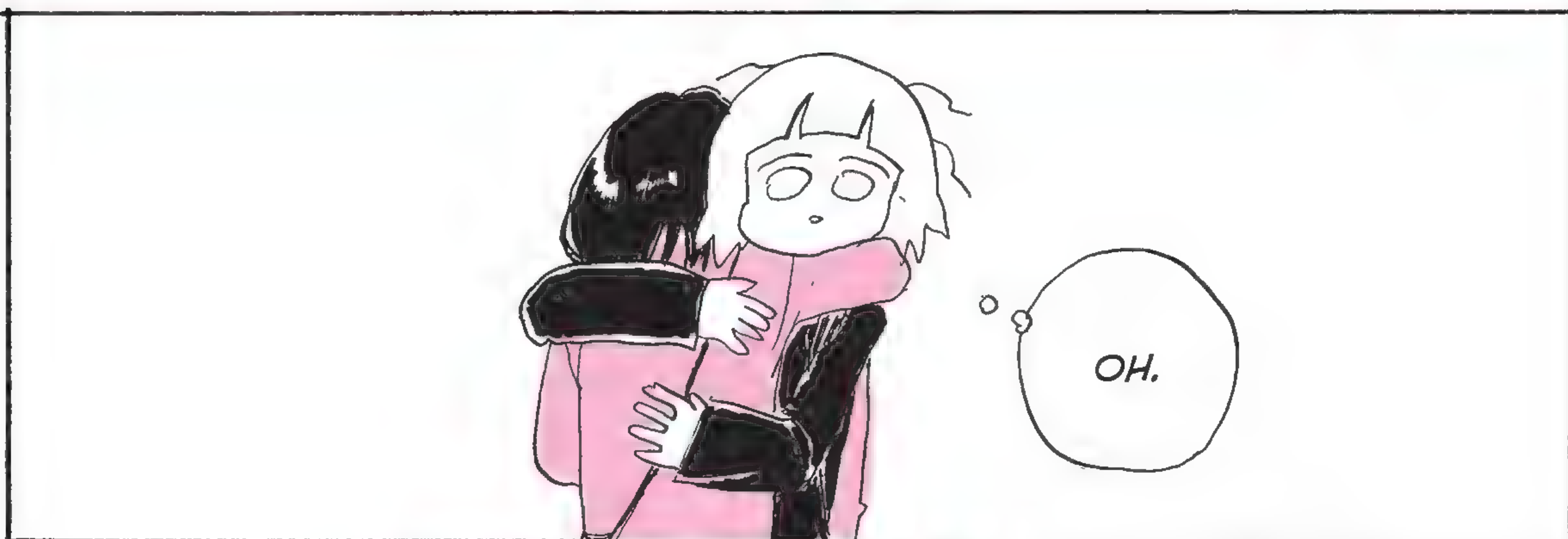
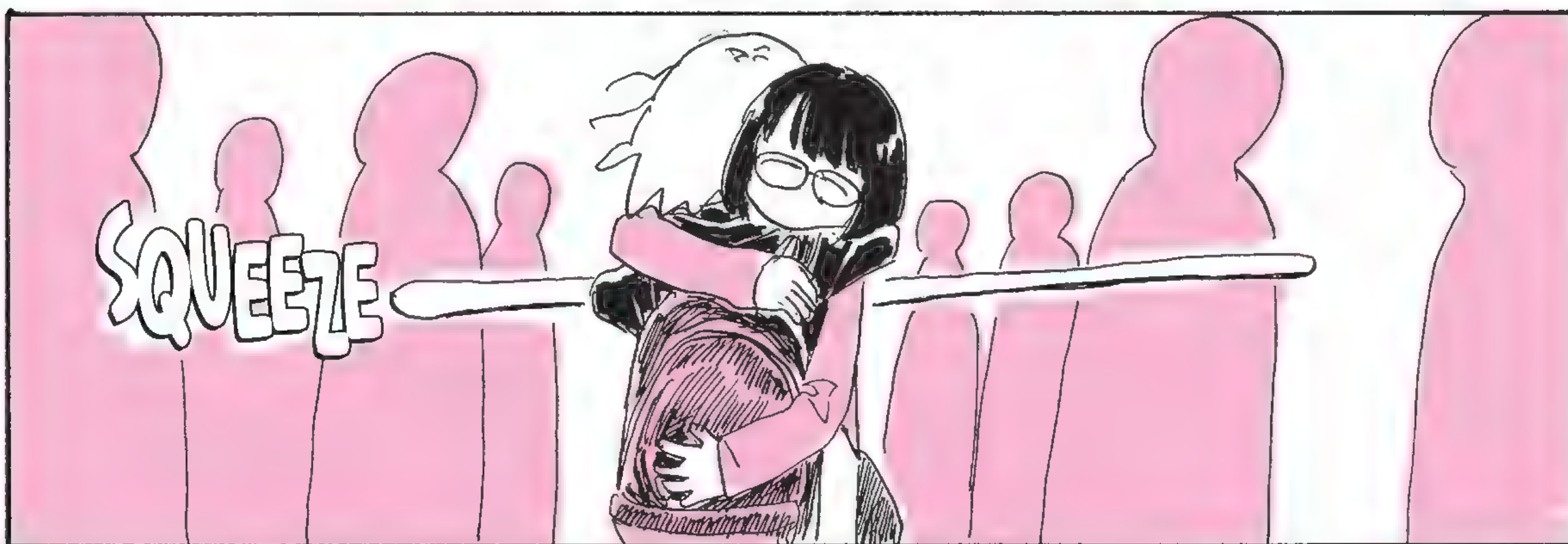
LET'S FIX THIS SCREEN UP.

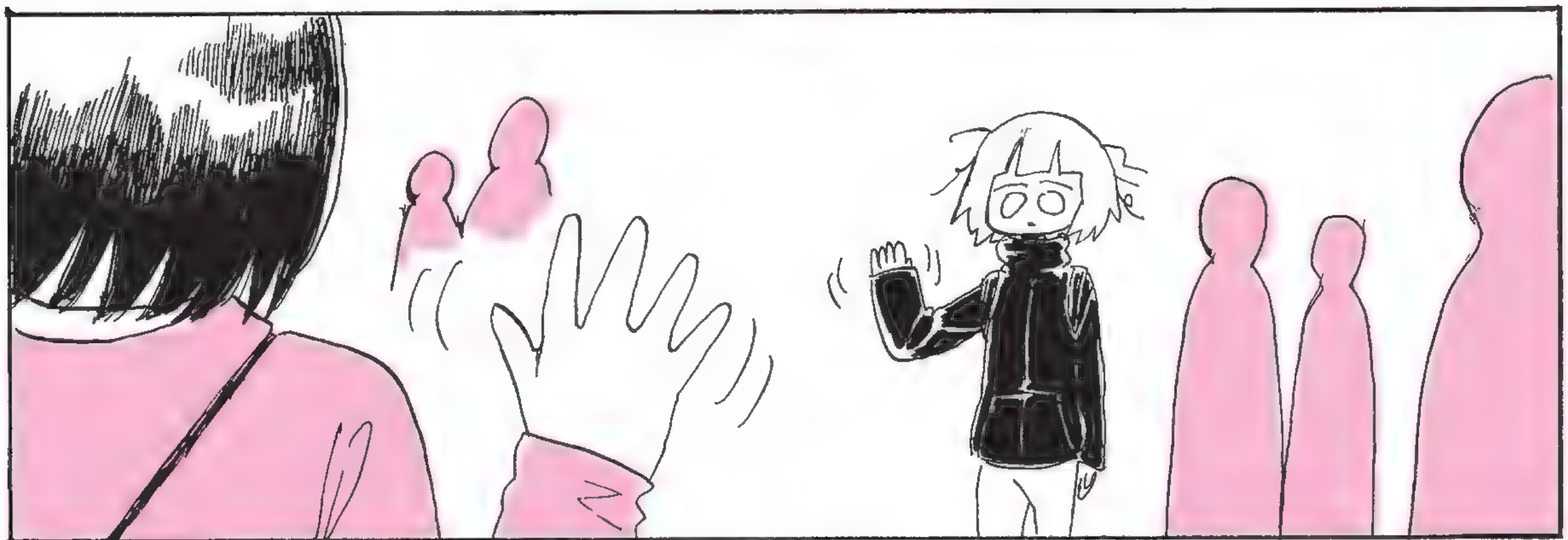
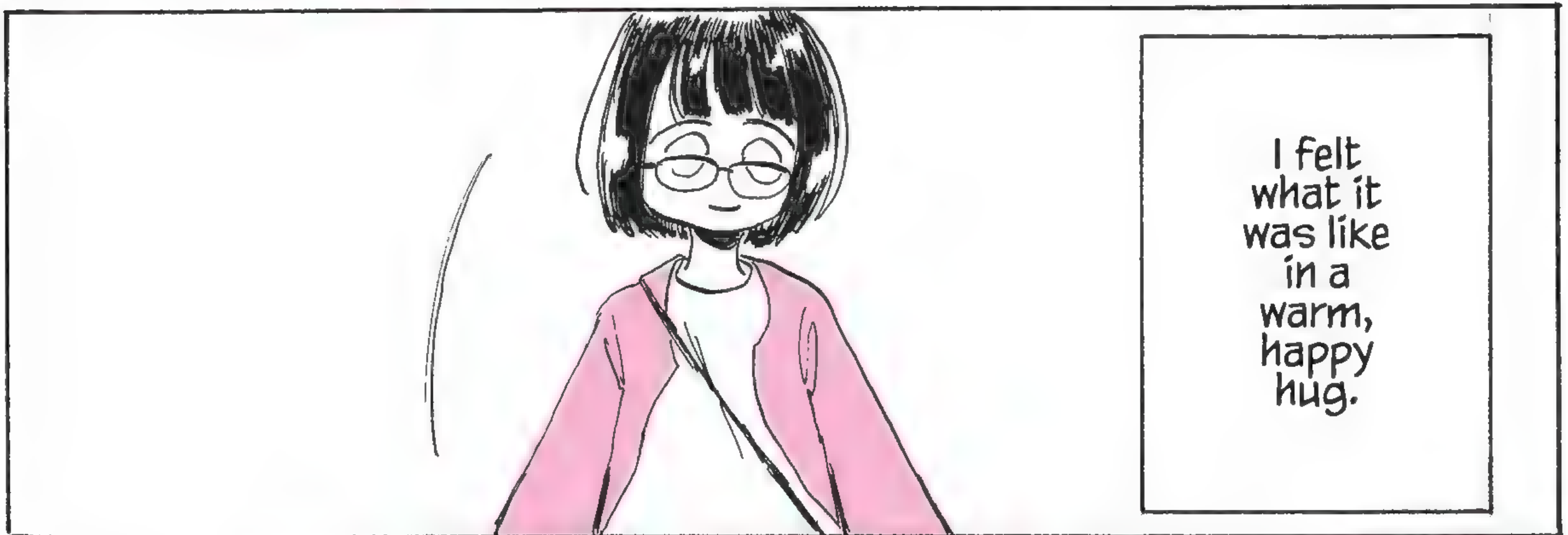
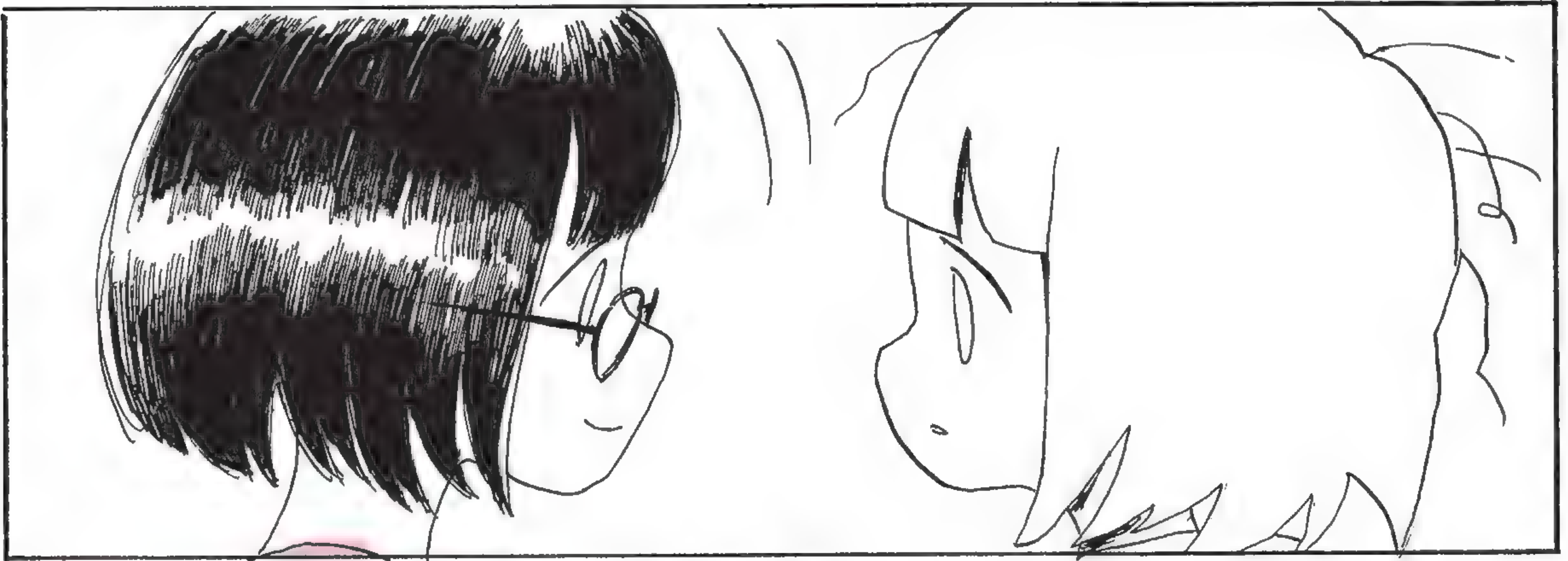


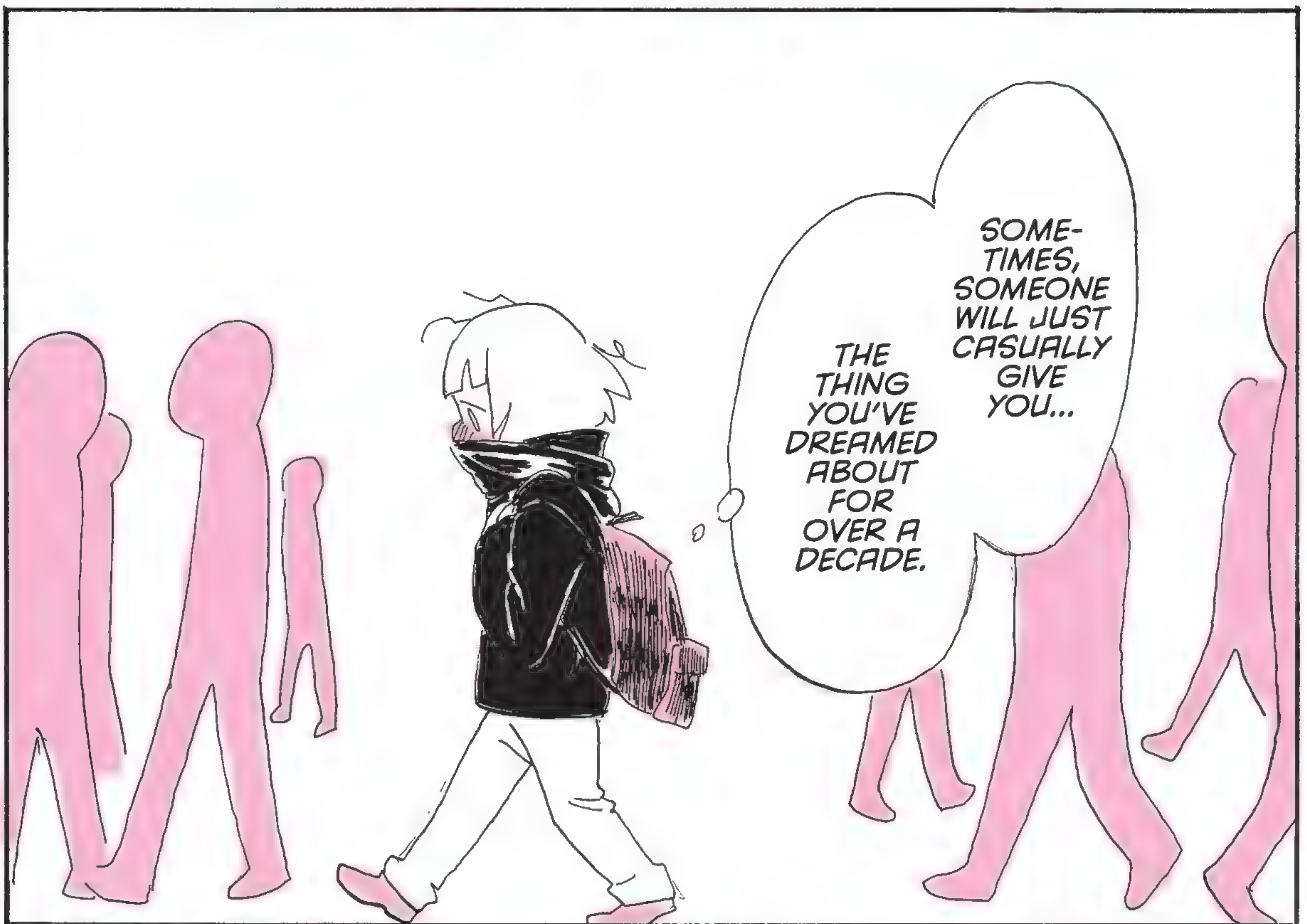
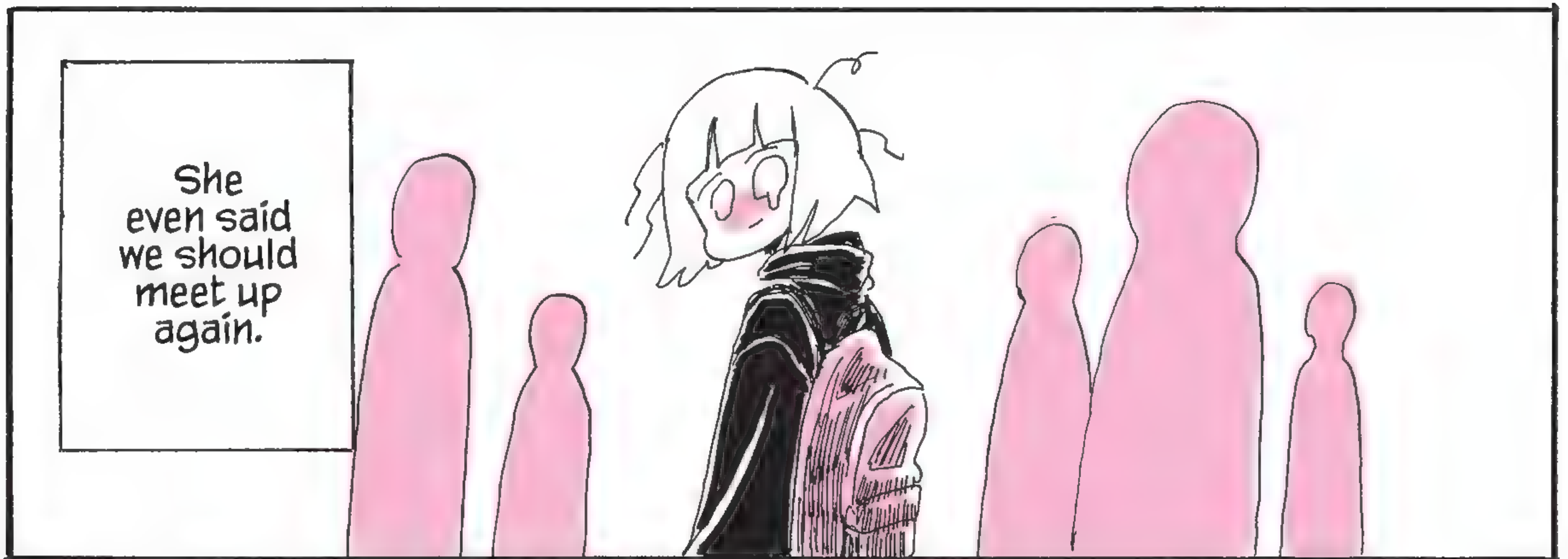
HUH? WHOA.



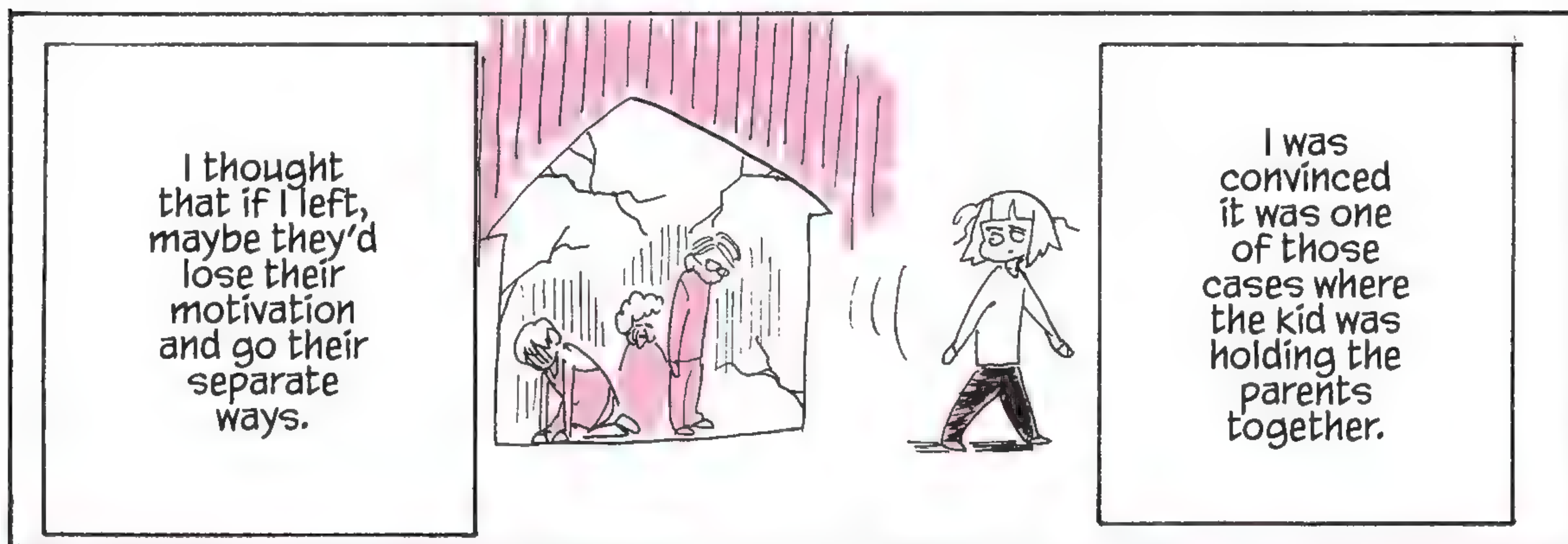
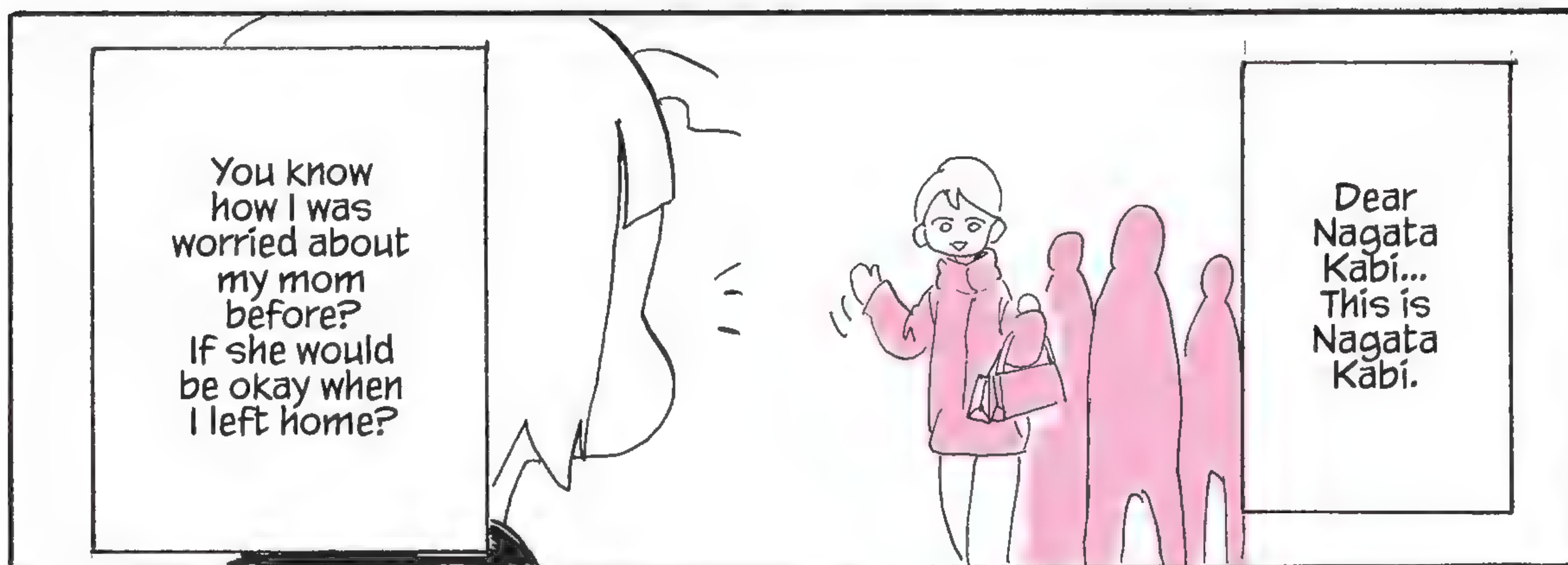


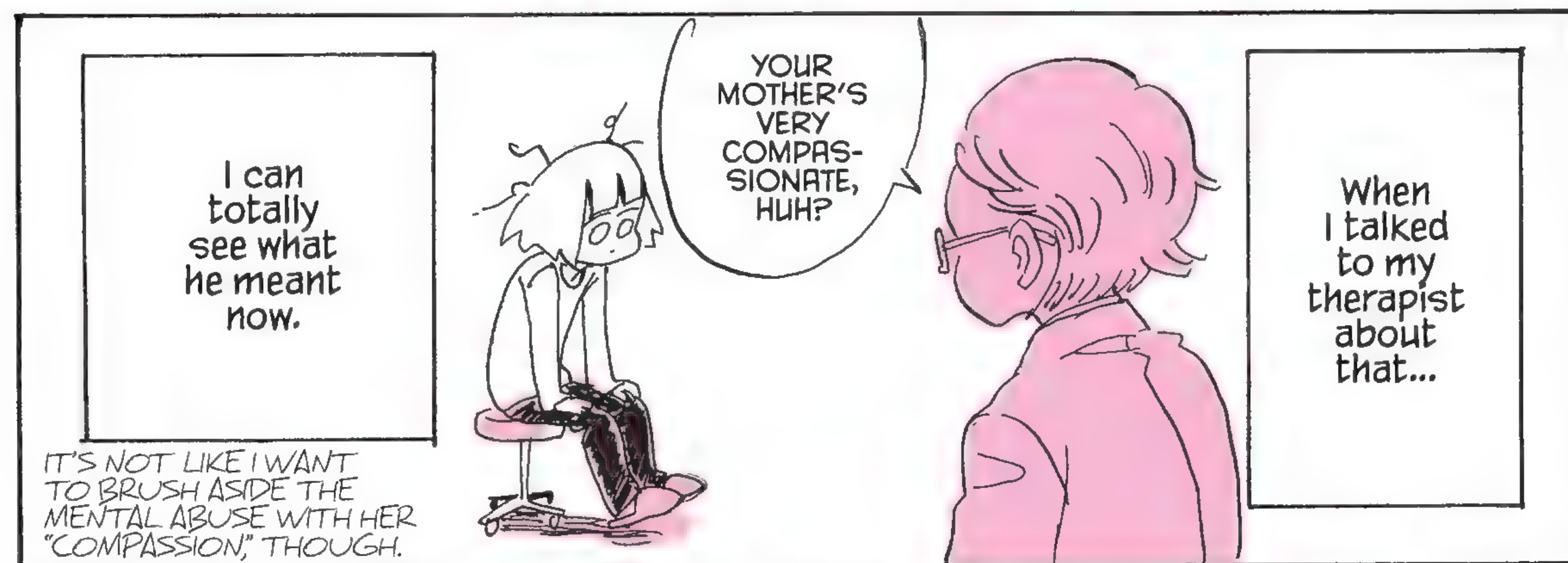
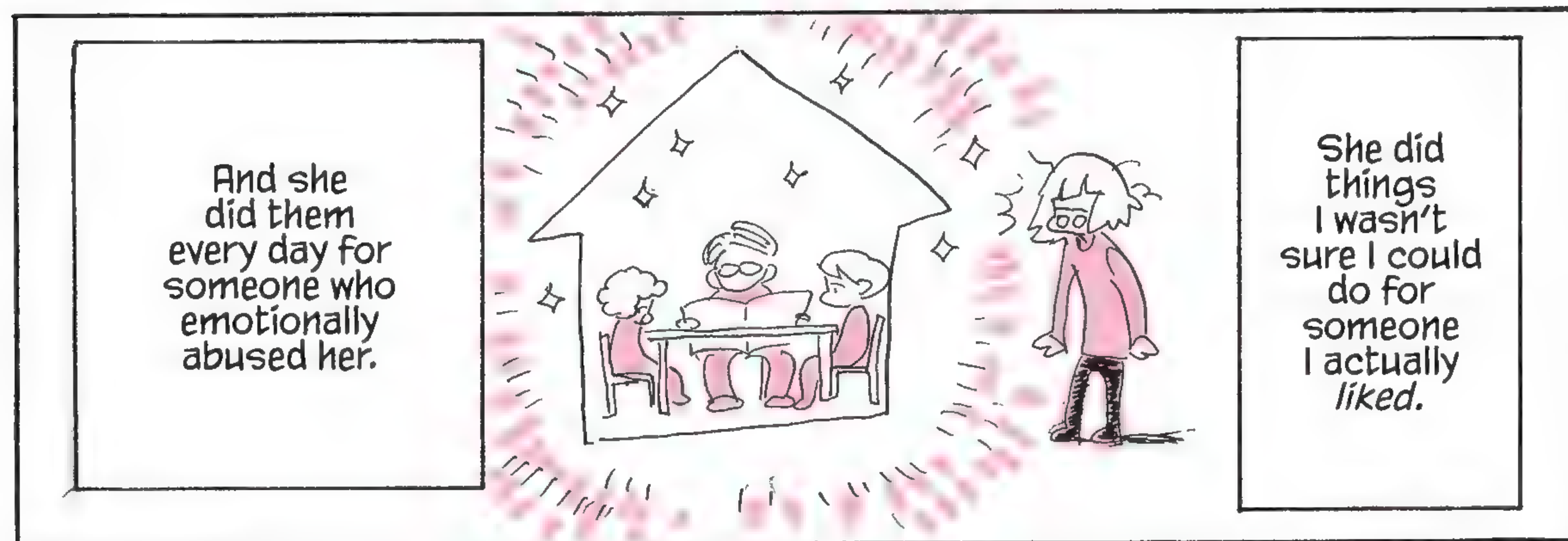
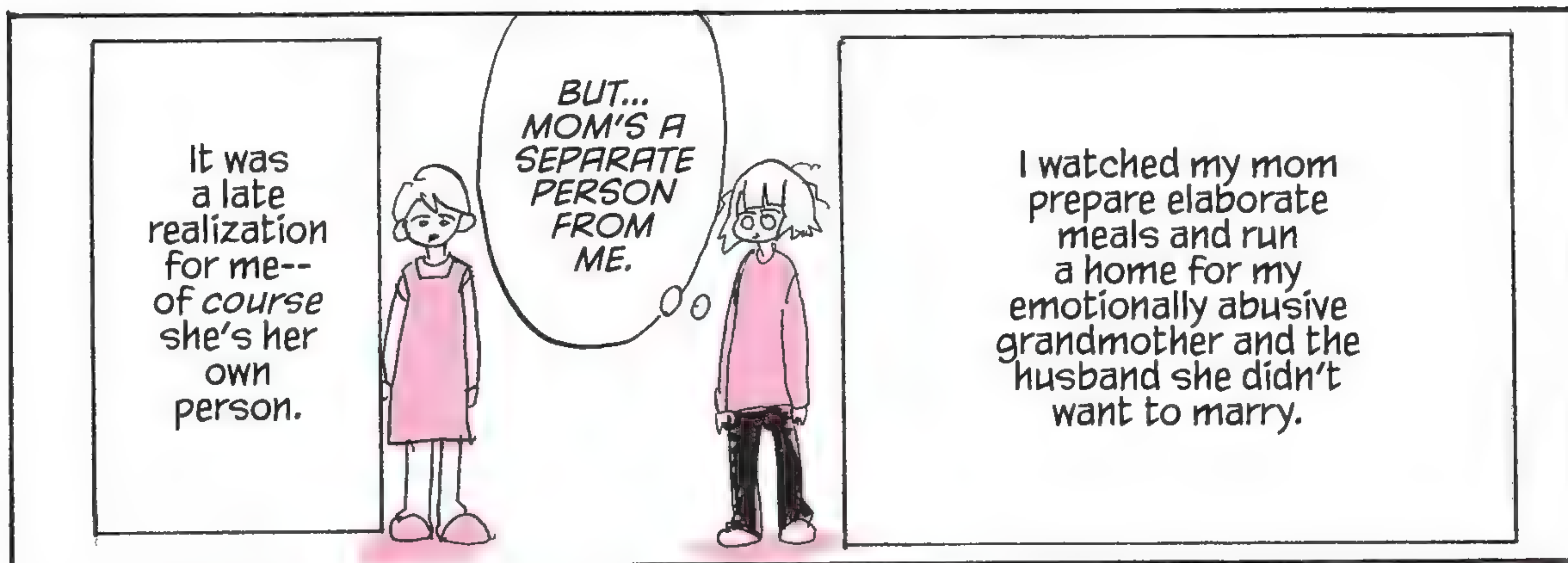


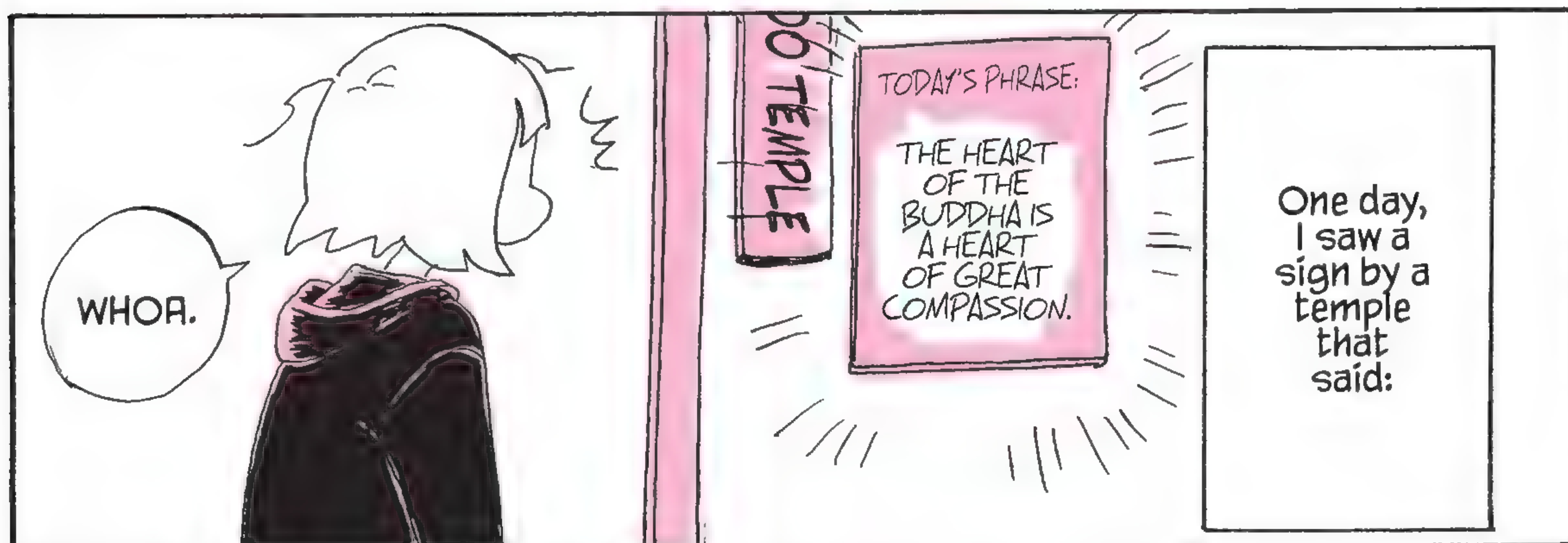
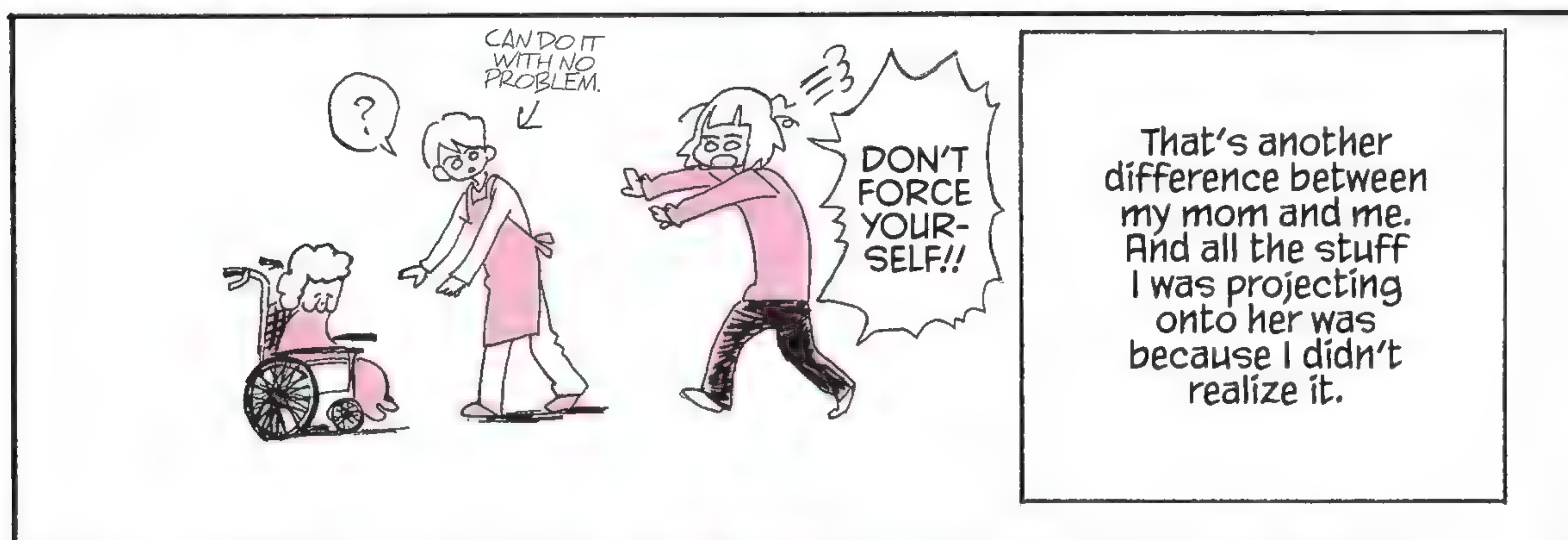


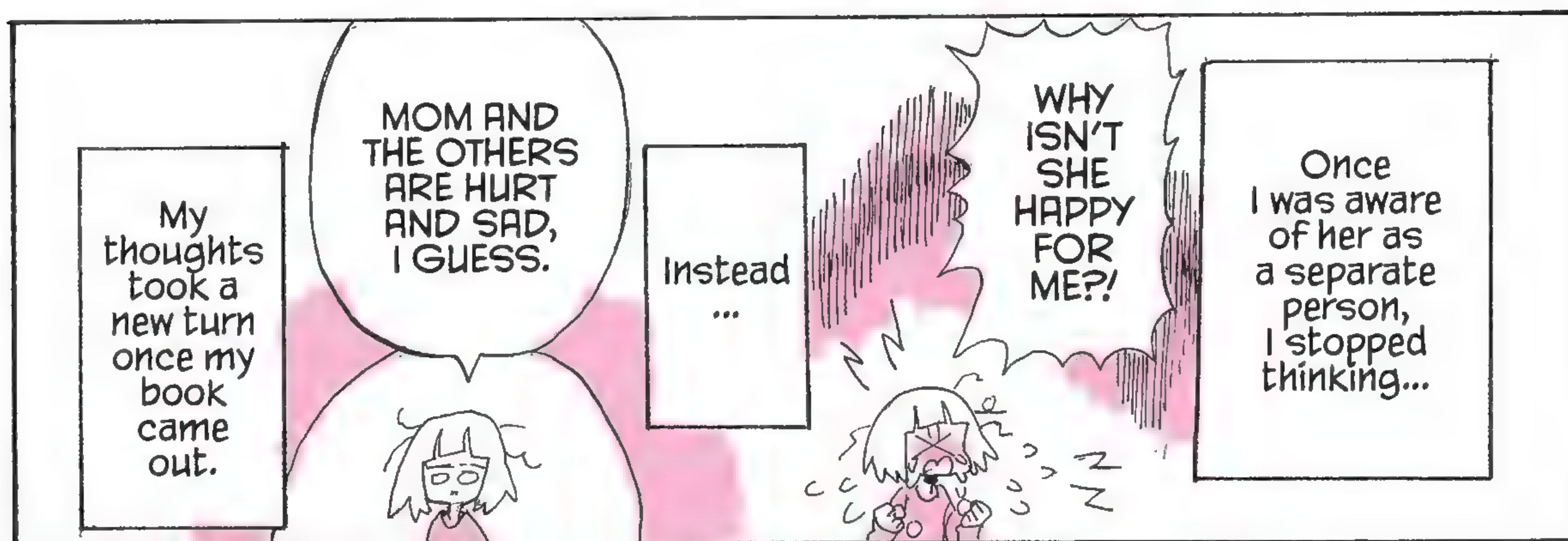
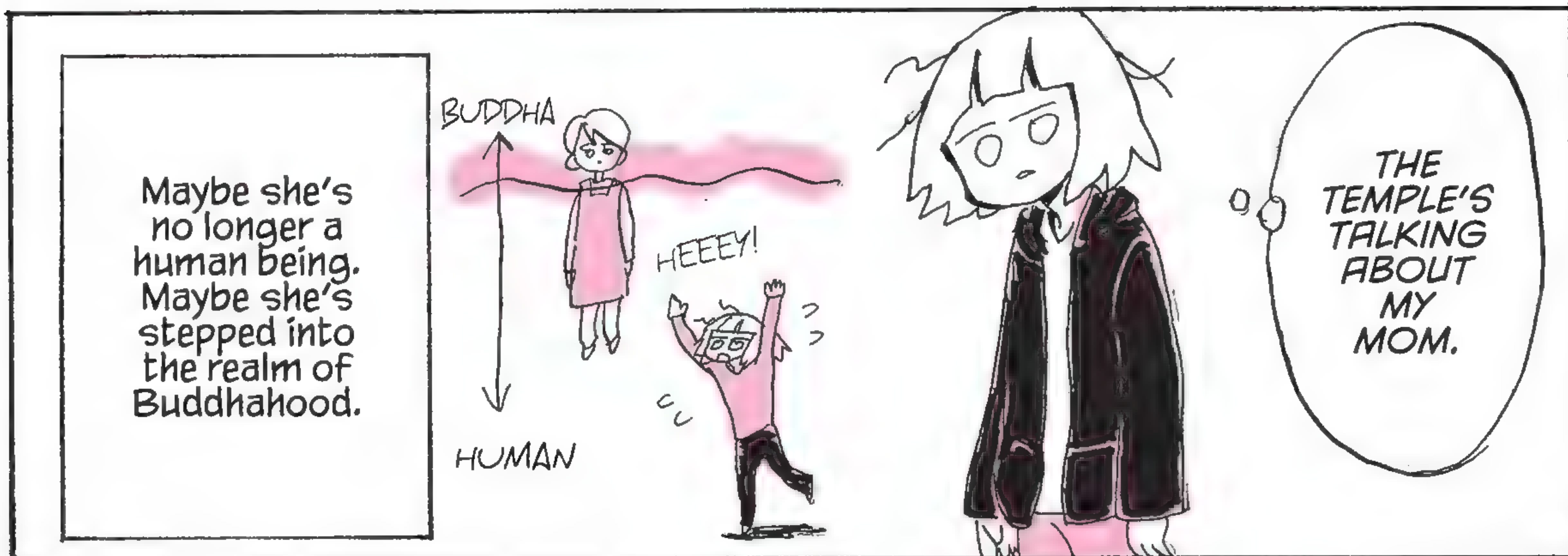


My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2









And
I thought
I could never
go back--
not once
I drew
whatever
I wanted.

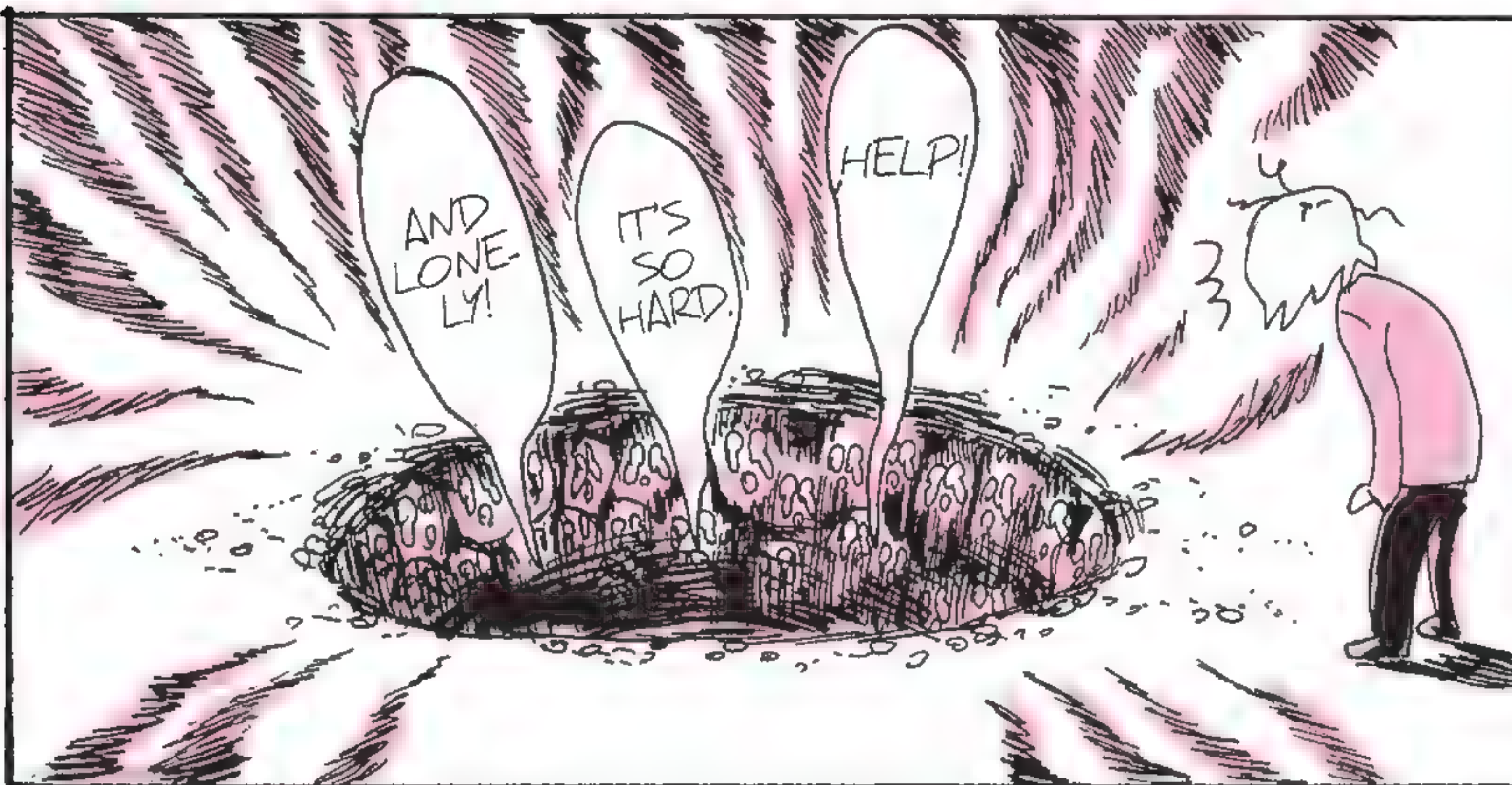


I left
home to
release
the
brakes
on my
art.

After more
than six
months of
being alone
at work and
at home,
I'd reached
my limit.



It was like
I'd been running
nonstop
for months.
Suddenly,
all the day-to-
day exhaustion
overcame me.



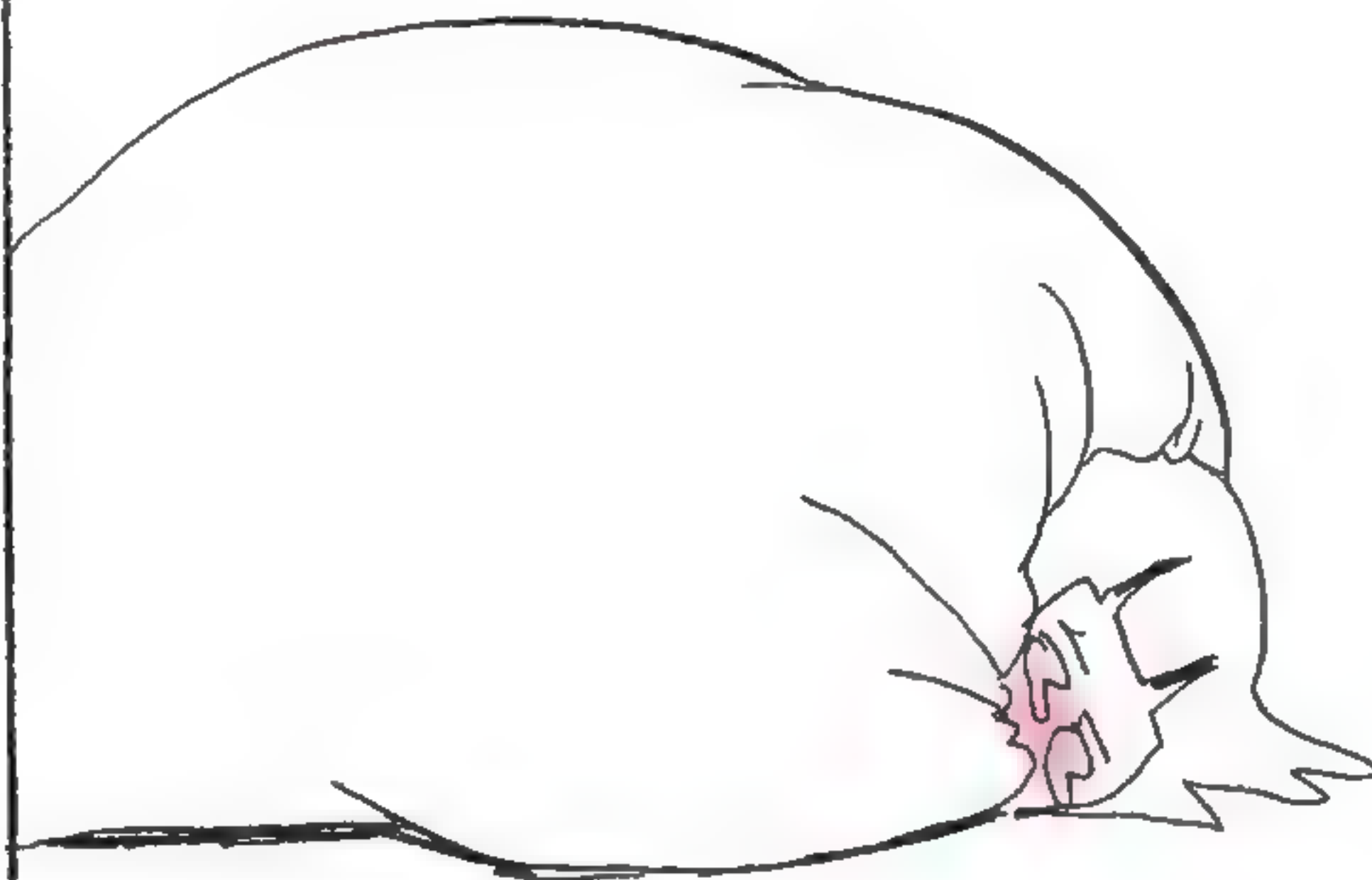
I felt like all
my past effort,
neglect, and
loneliness had
piled up in this
cavernous pit...
and now it was
crying out
at me.

The day
ended with
me just
hunched
over and
sobbing.



I couldn't
do
anything.
I couldn't
fight
anymore.

Against all expectation,
I got nostalgic
about my parents'
house.



I
couldn't
stand
it.

And my
family's
reaction
was a lot
kinder
than I'd
expected.



FROM MOM

I GAVE YOU A KEY. YOU
WEREN'T DISINHERITED,
YOU KNOW.



I'M
GLAD
THAT
DIDN'T
HAPPEN
TO ME!!



DON'T
DARKEN
THIS
DOOR-
WAY
EVER
AGAIN!!



To go on a
slight tangent,
when people in
my mother's
generation
(late fifties)
were young,
their classmates
actually did get
disinherited a lot.
Scary.

WELCOME
HOME.



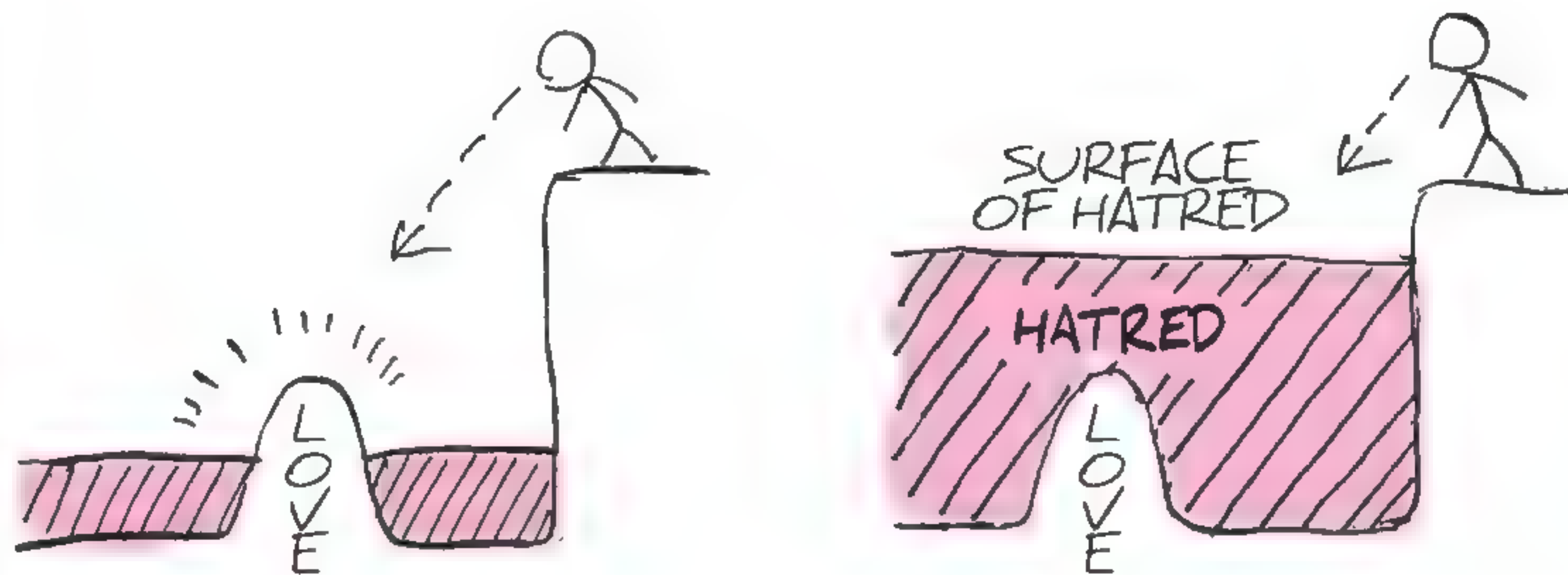
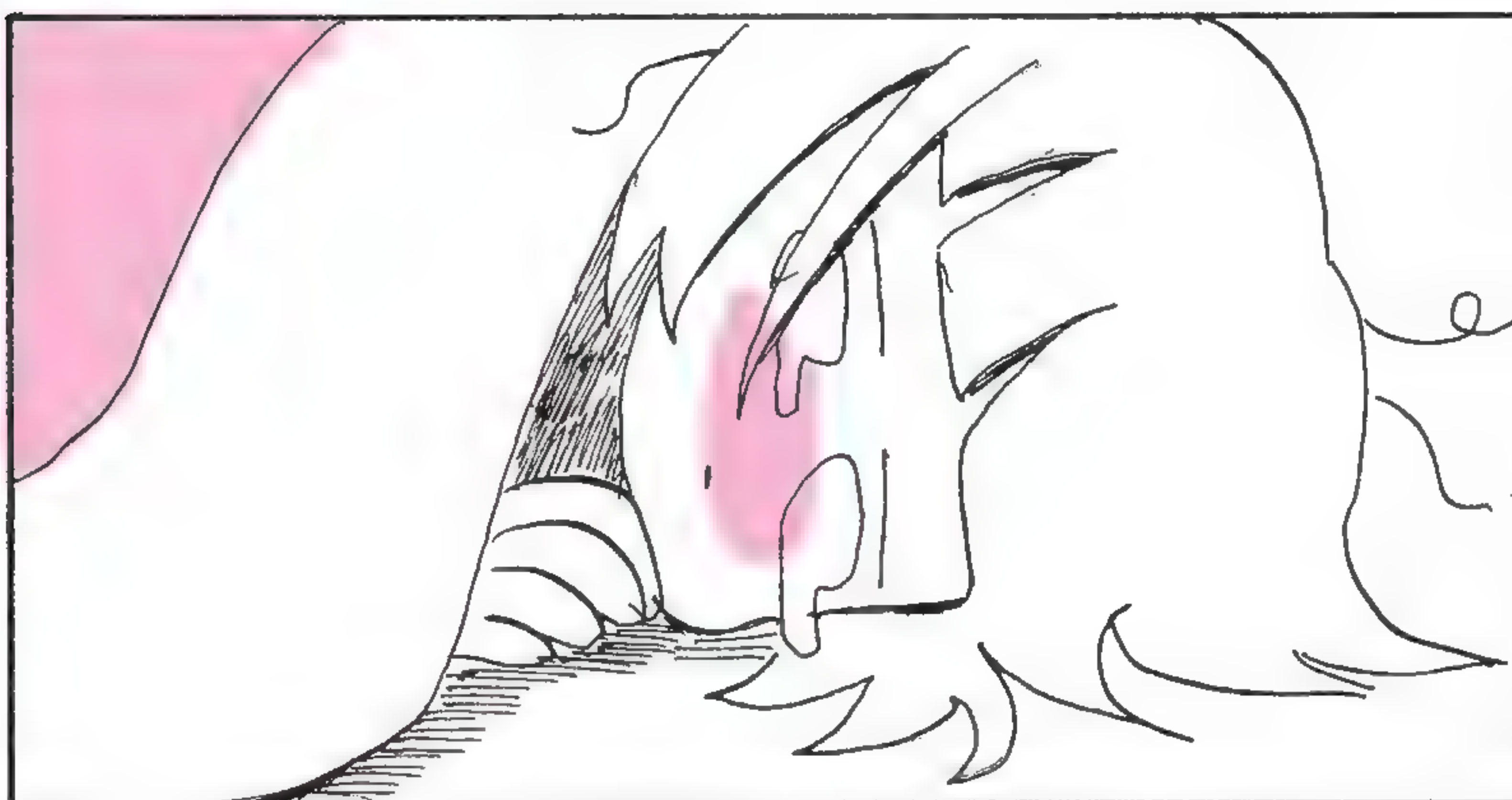
KA-
CHAK

I cried
every
time
she was
nice to
me.



I had lunch
at my
parents'
house,
and then my
mom let me
take a nap
on her
futon.

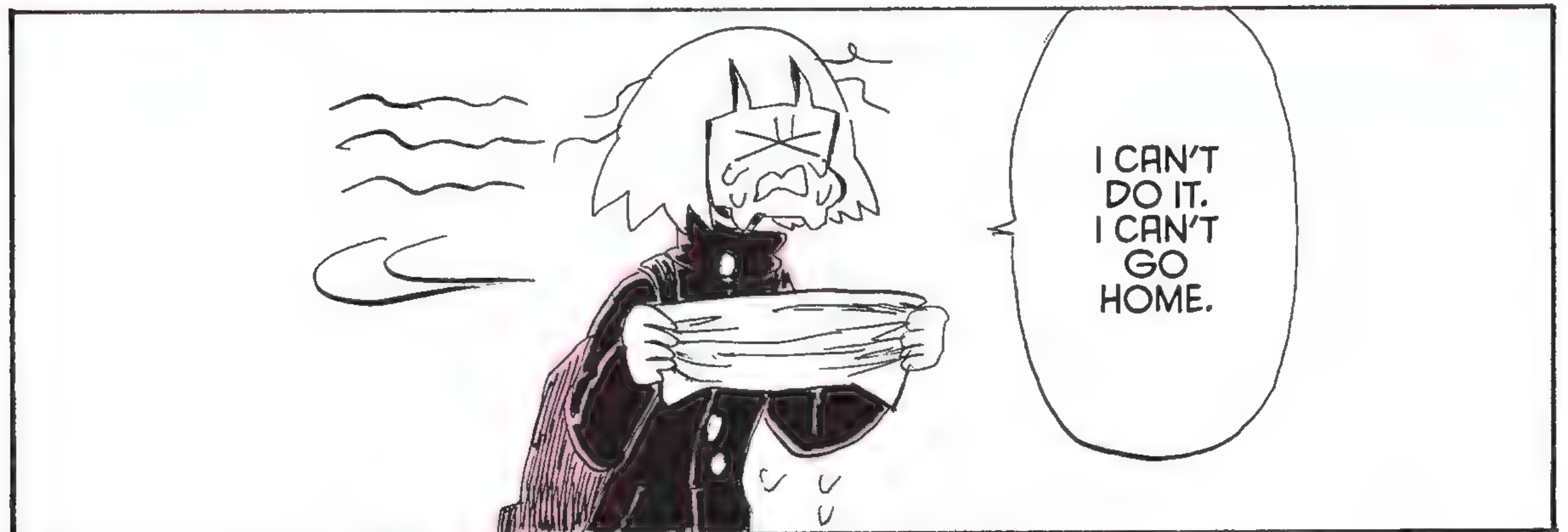
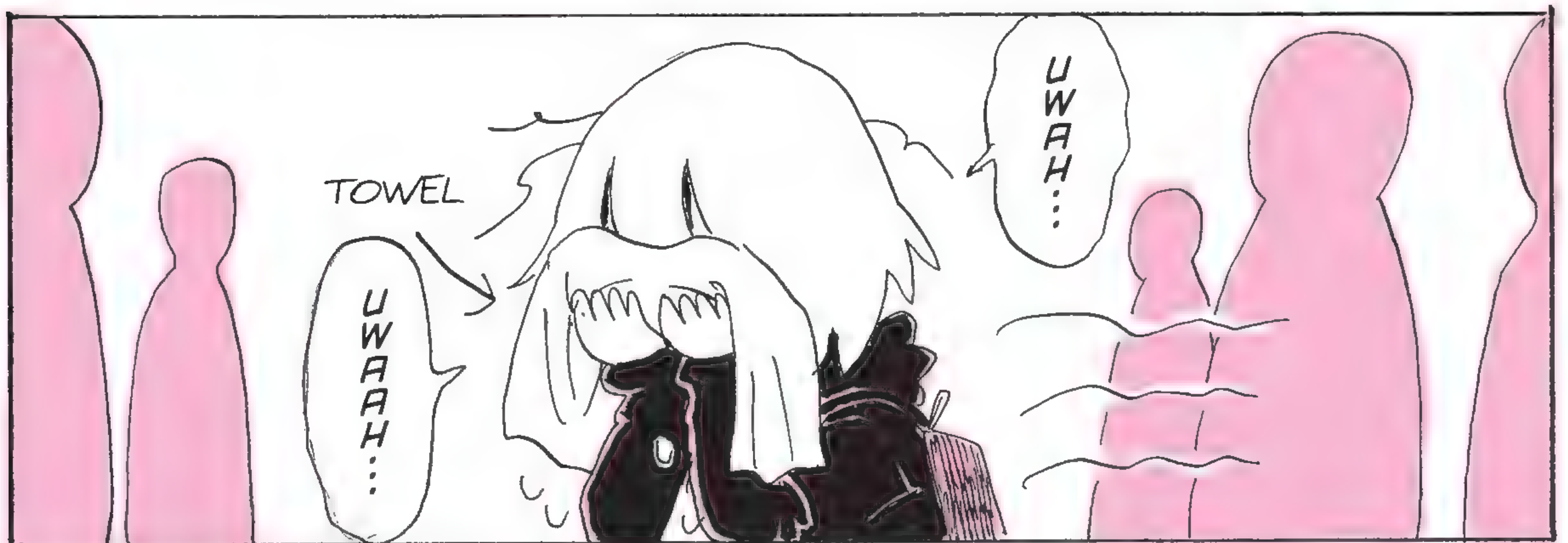
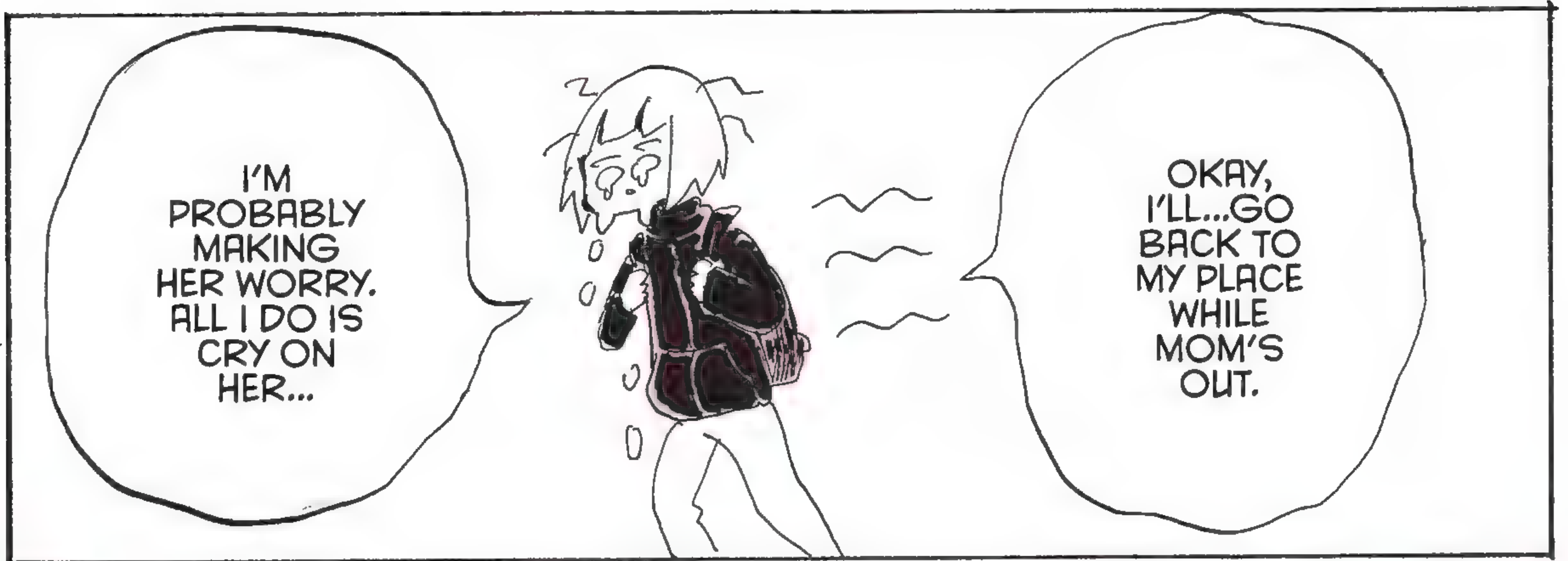
Deep in
my heart,
I no longer
knew if
I loved
or hated
my family.

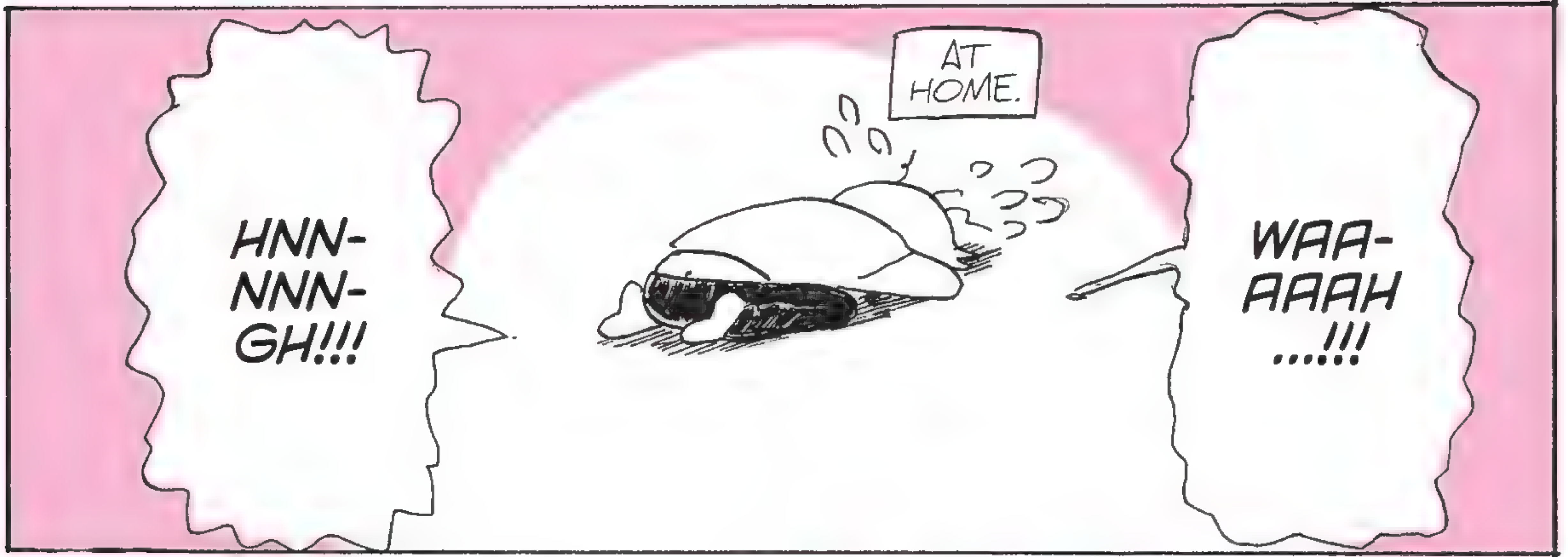


I thought
my love for
them was
like an
island that
could only
be seen at
low tide.

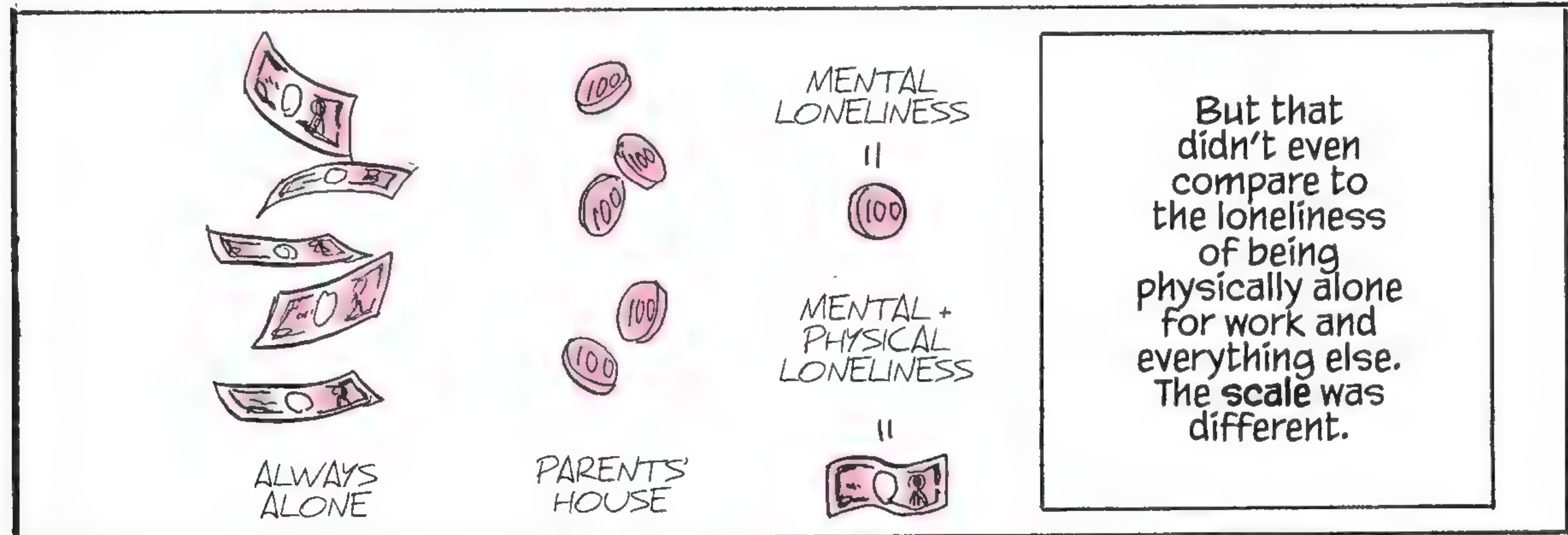
I started to
wonder if I
wanted to leave
my place and
move back in
with my family.
My world had
turned
upside down.













Lonely
Unico
was
me...



The
magical,
wish-
granting
Unico
was my
friends...



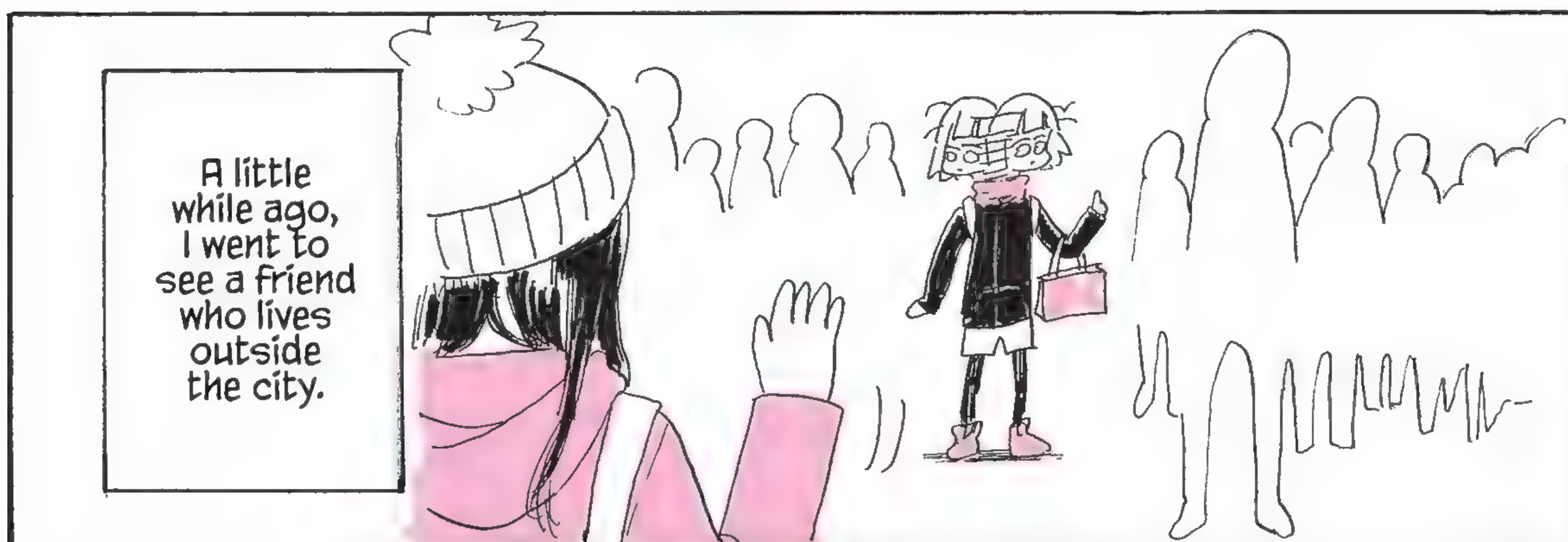
Unico
was
some-
times me,
some-
times my
friends.

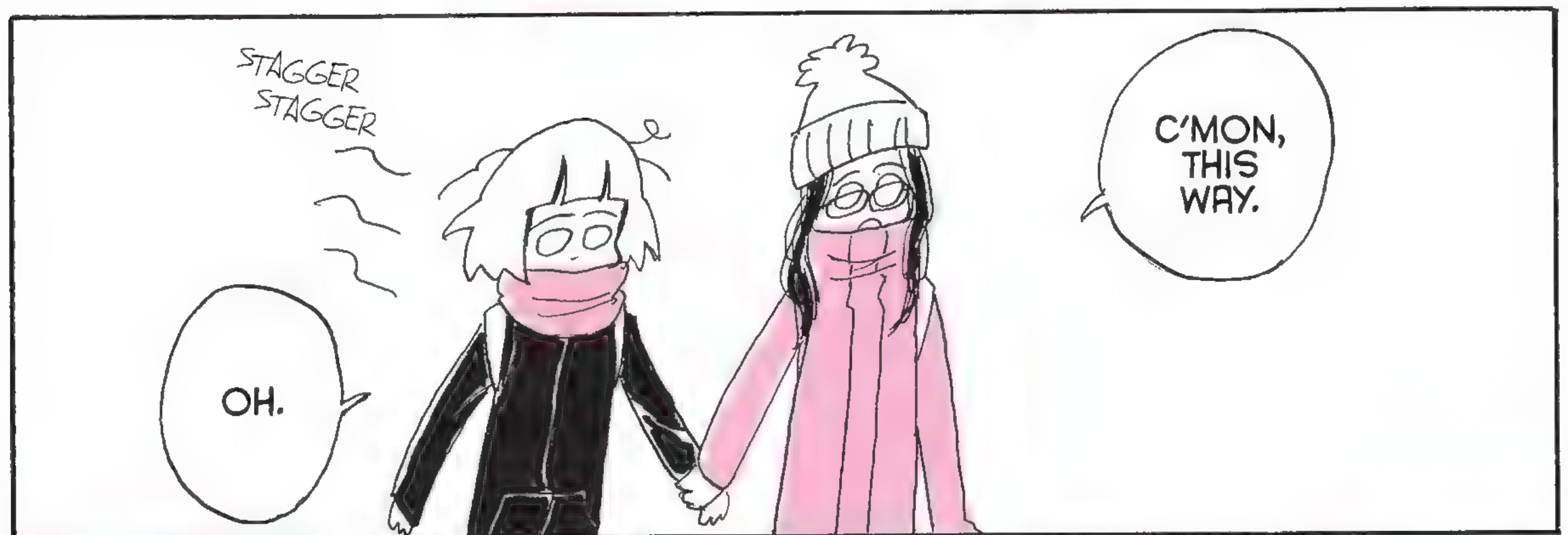
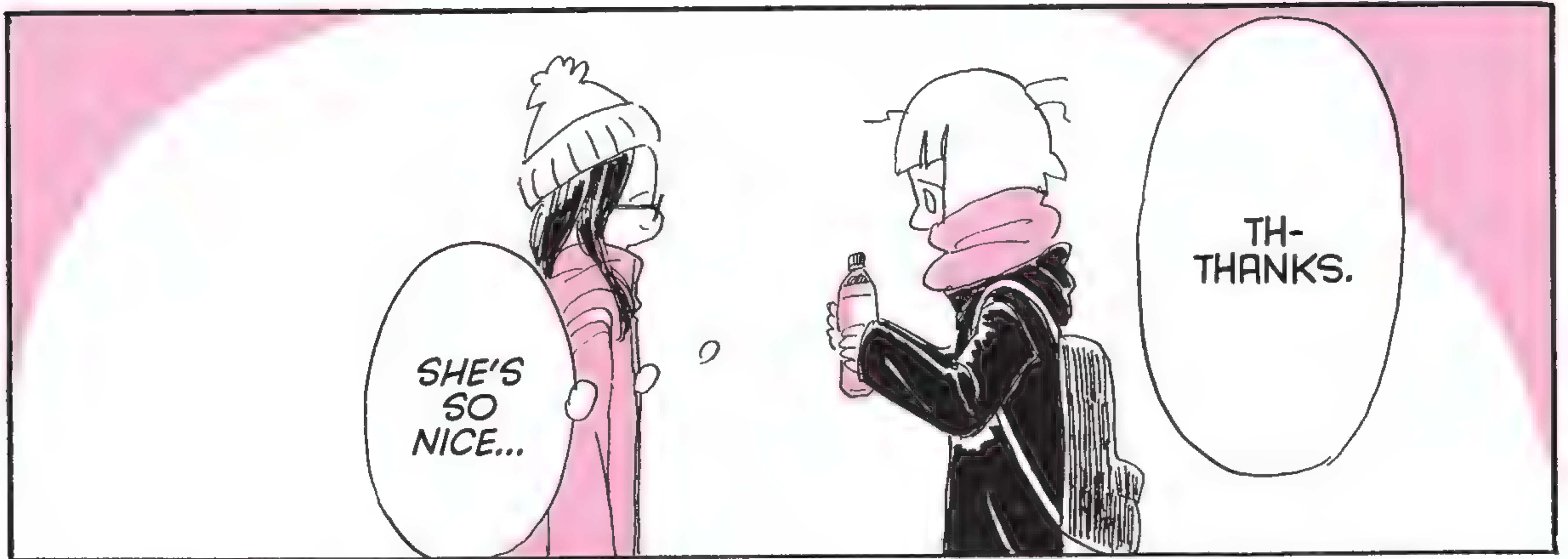


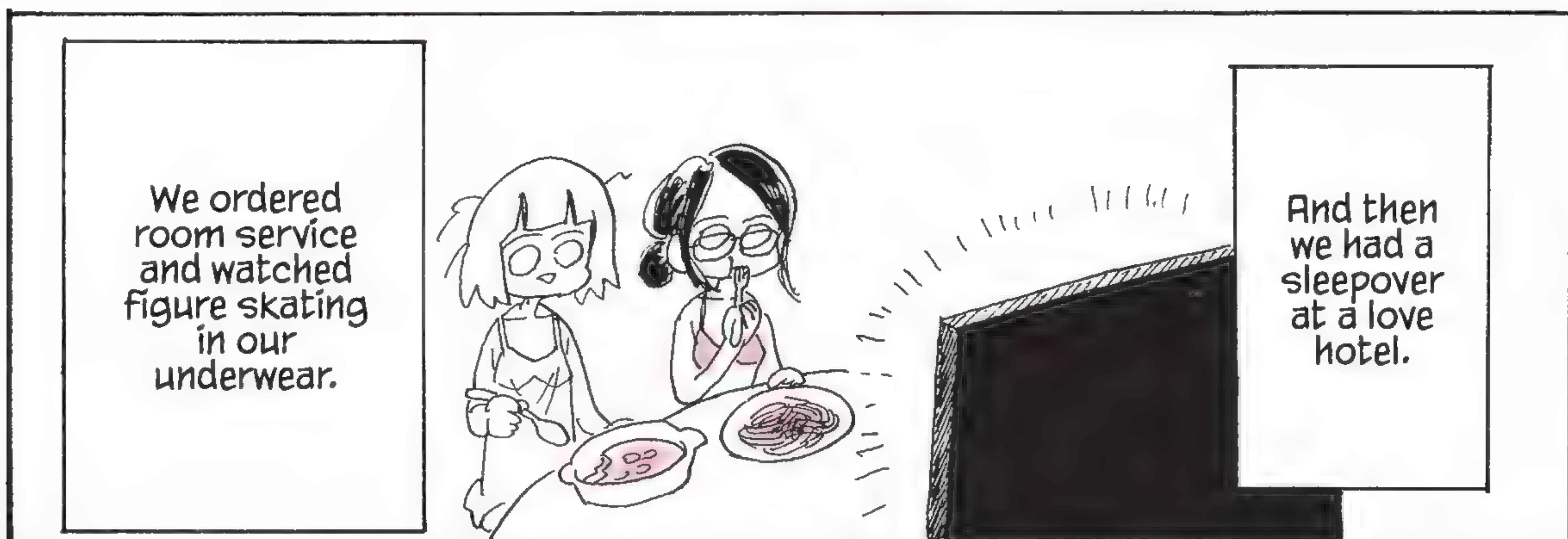
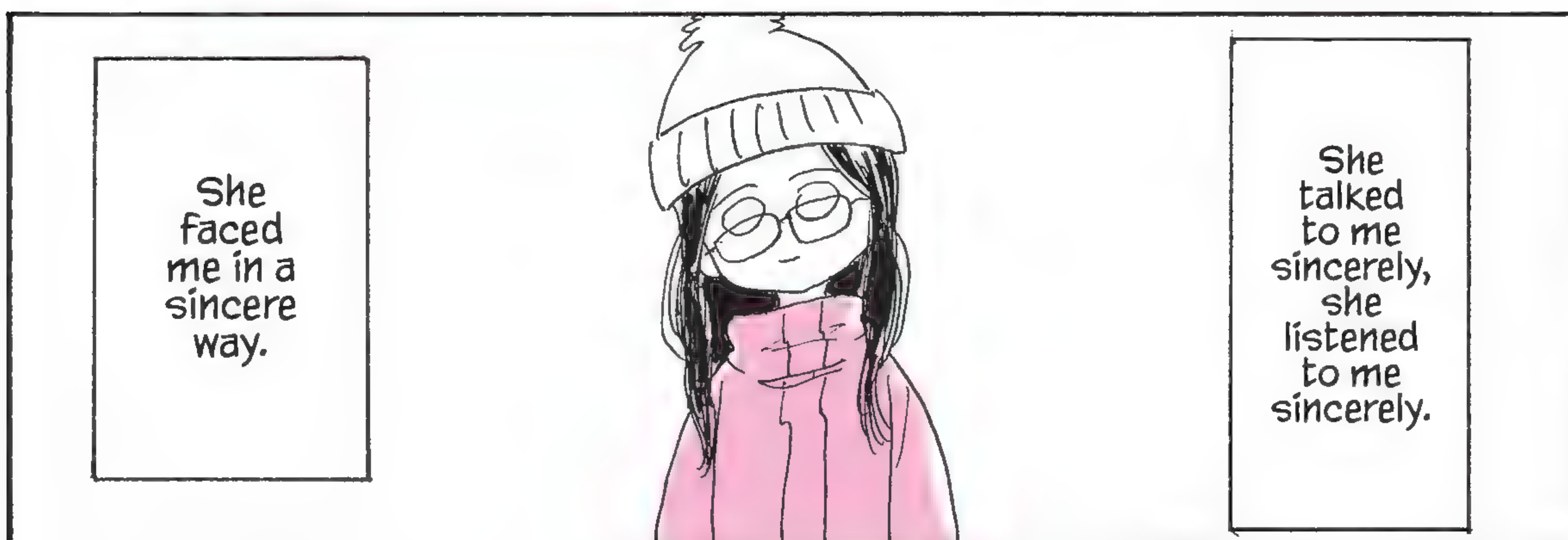
HE
COULD
GRANT
THEIR
WISHES.



BECAUSE
THEY
LOVED
HIM...







I didn't get it at the time, but a few minutes before we said goodbye, I realized... that's not what it means to "open up."



The next day, we chatted and found a little shop to poke around in. I decided to go home early.

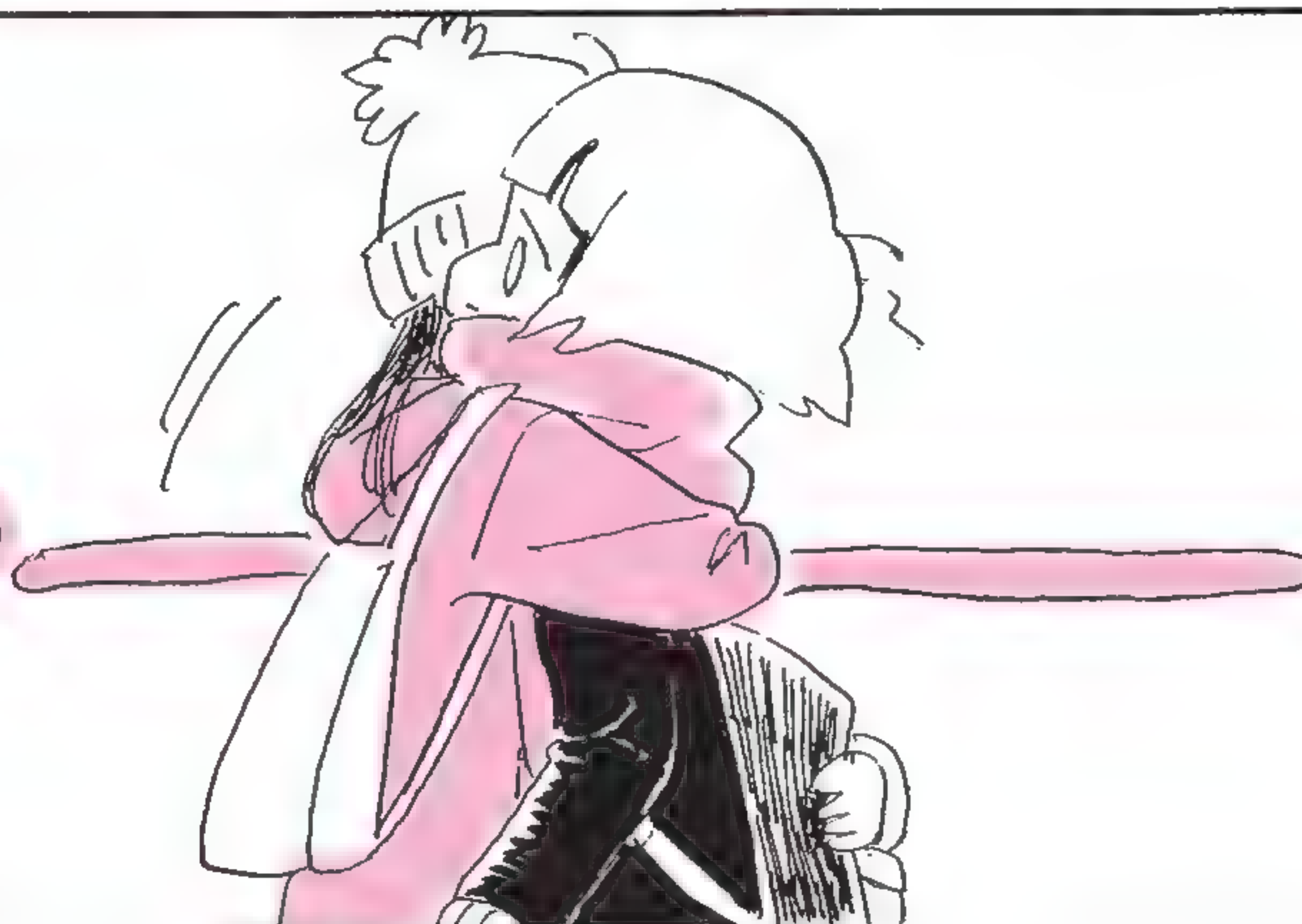
I'LL COME SEE YOU, TOO.

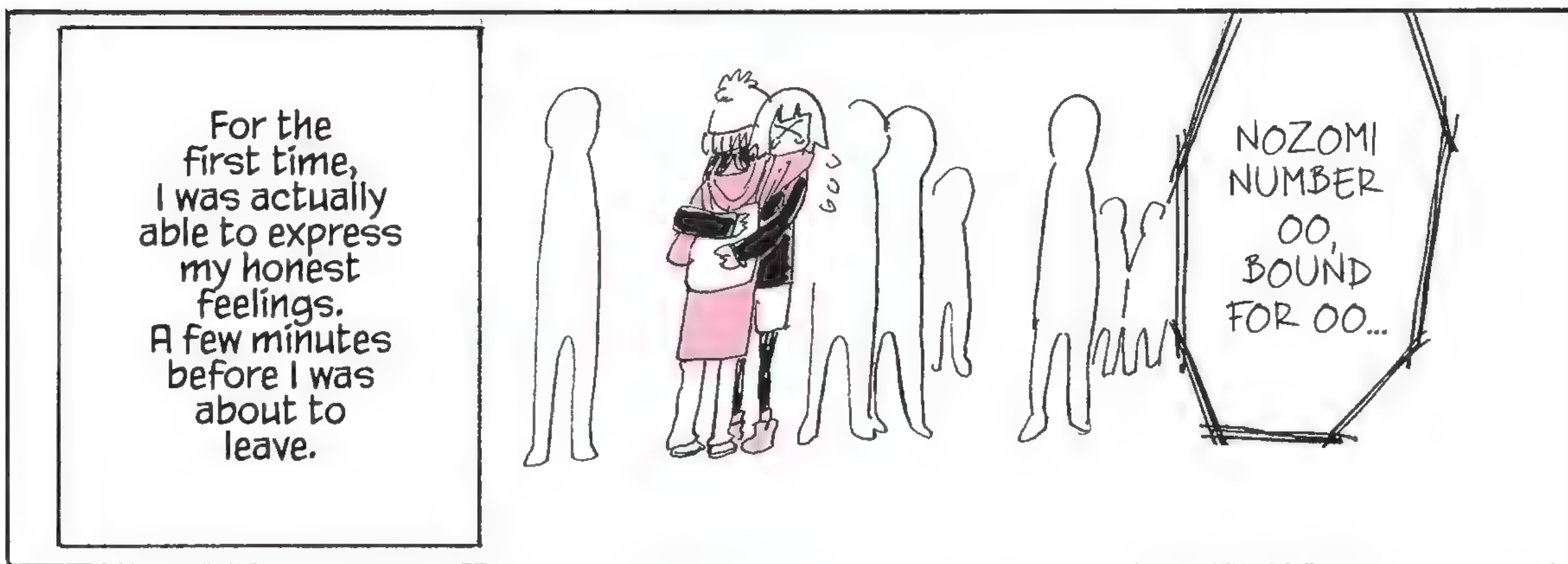
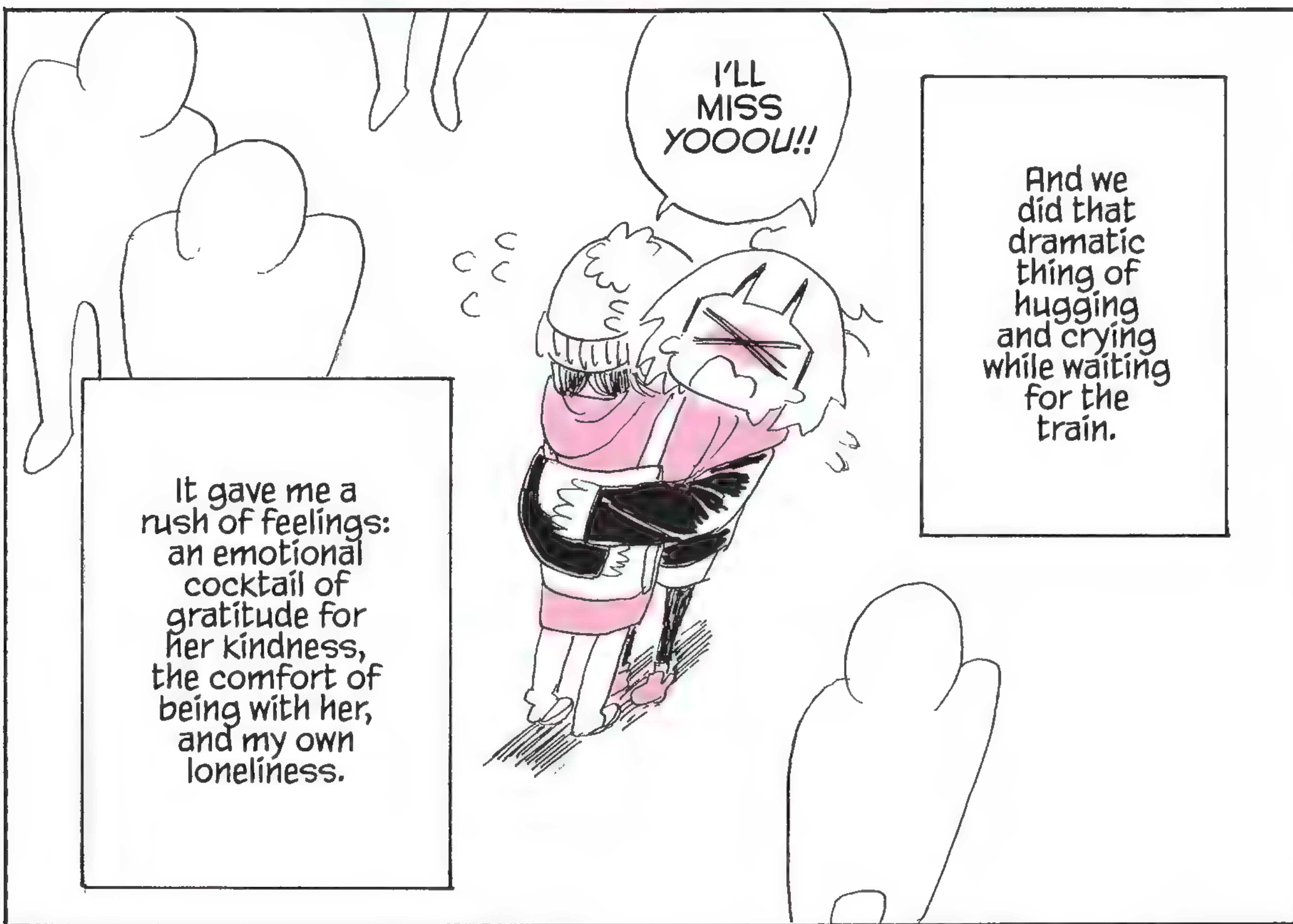


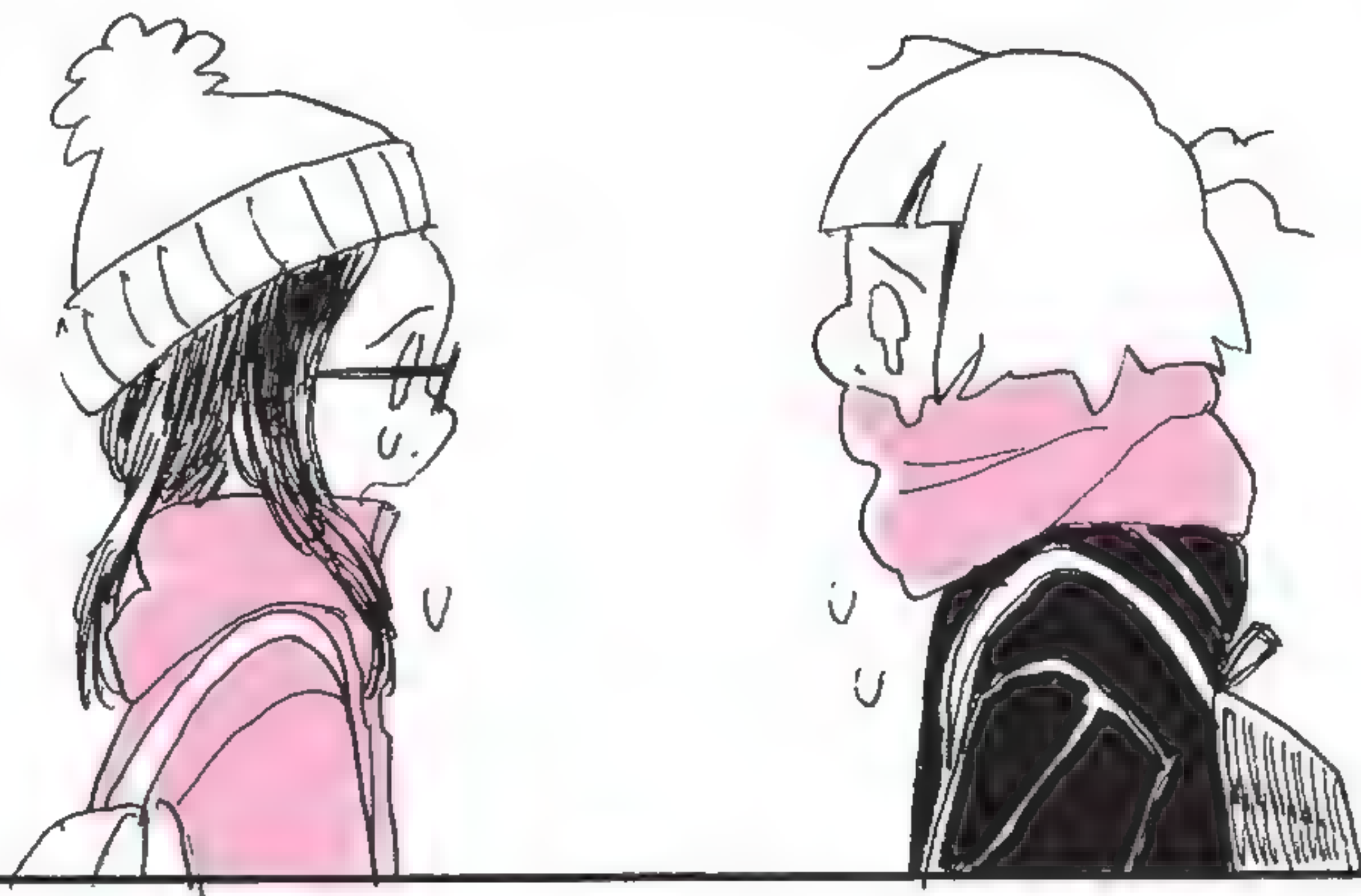
LET'S DO THIS AGAIN, OKAY?

She bought a platform ticket to come onto the bullet train platform and see me off.

squeeze

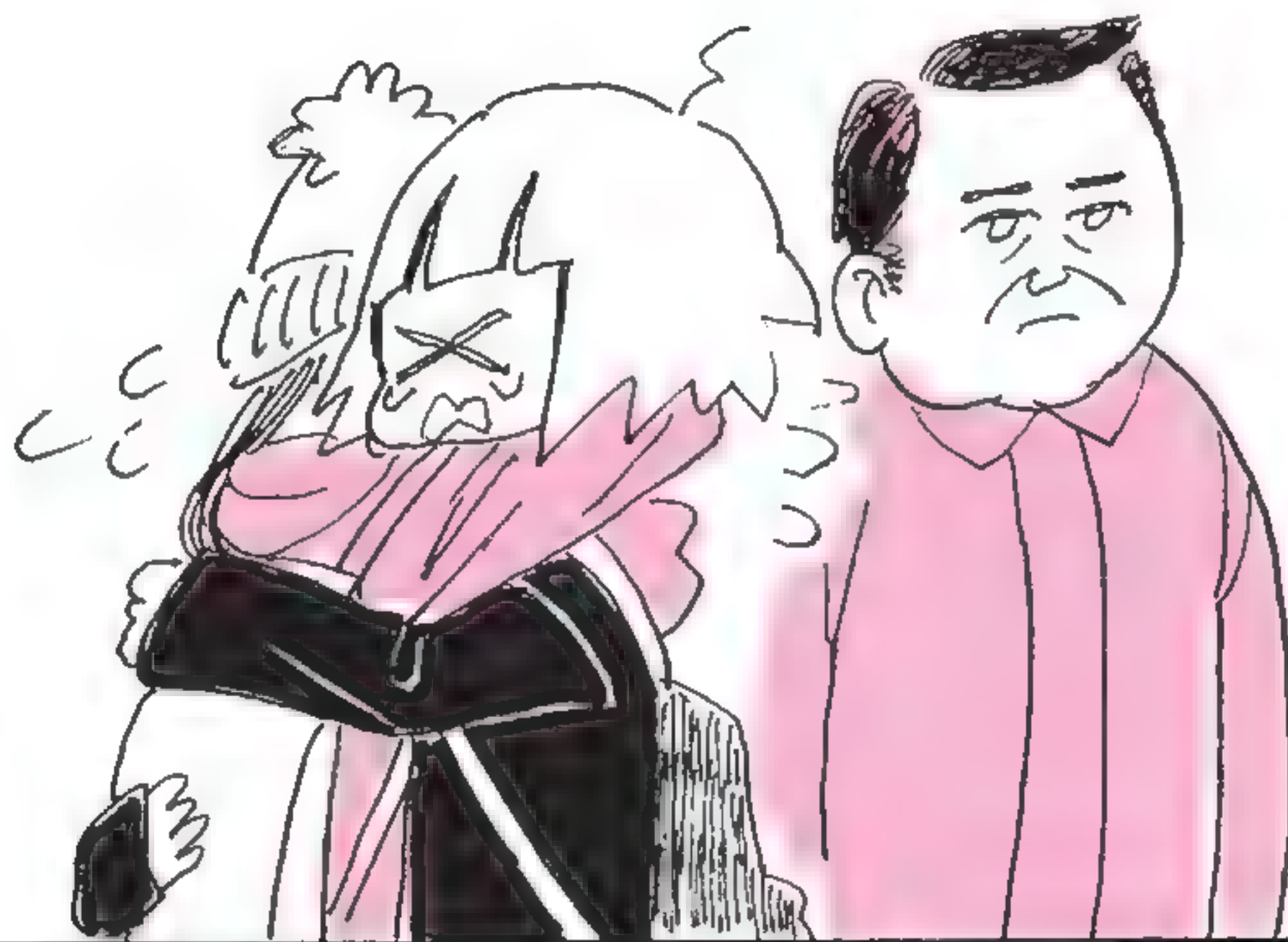
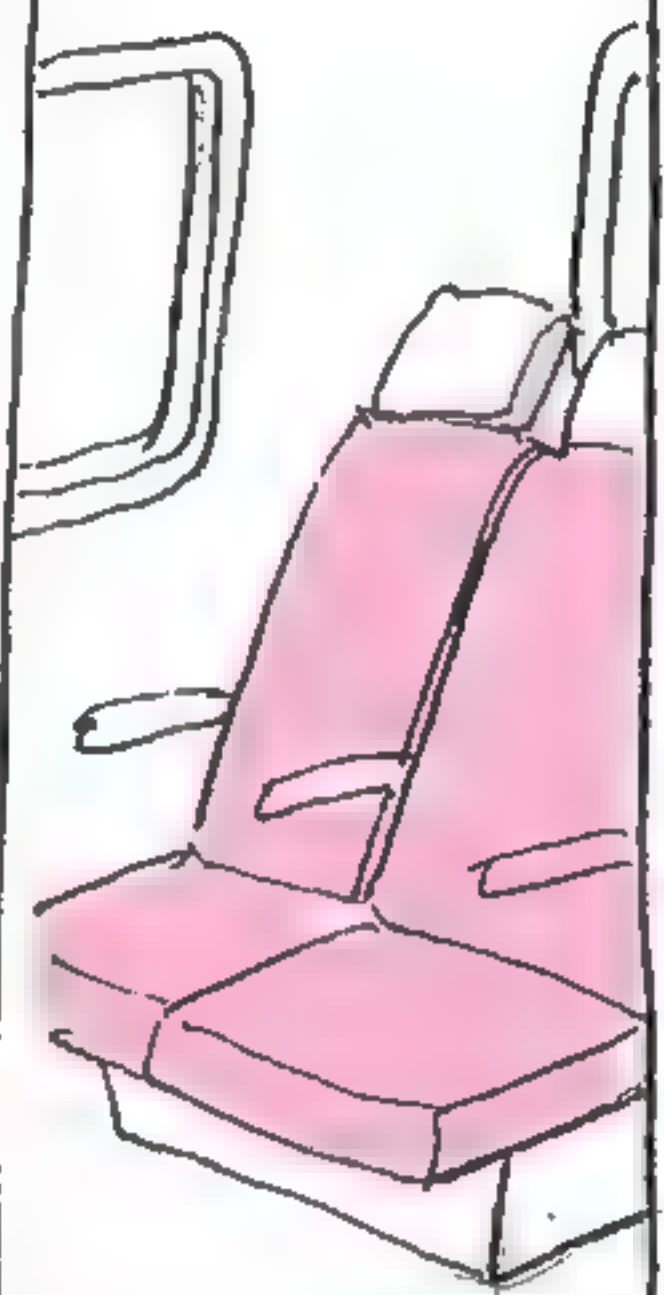






The train was arriving, but I could finally share how I felt with her-- someone who wanted to be so sincere and straightforward with me.

And she was kind enough to accept those feelings. Those were the happiest, most fulfilling minutes of the entire overnight trip.



Also, the older gentleman right behind us on the platform as we hugged and cried didn't even bat an eye--that was impressive, too.

Real life turned dramatic again as I sobbed on the speeding bullet train... all the way home.





We
talked
to each
other a
lot after
that,
too.

While
discuss-
ing it...

WILL ANYONE
LOVE THE
FUTURE ME?

One
day,
there
was a
store
promo
for My
Solo
Exchange
Diary
Vol. 1.

...is
what
she
told me.

I LOVE THE FUTURE
OO-CHAN (REAL NAME),
Y'KNOW!

Until
he meets
Unico,
he thinks
he's fine
all alone.



In *Unico*,
there's
a lonely
demon
who
lives by
himself.

I'd been convinced that I was fine being alone, too.



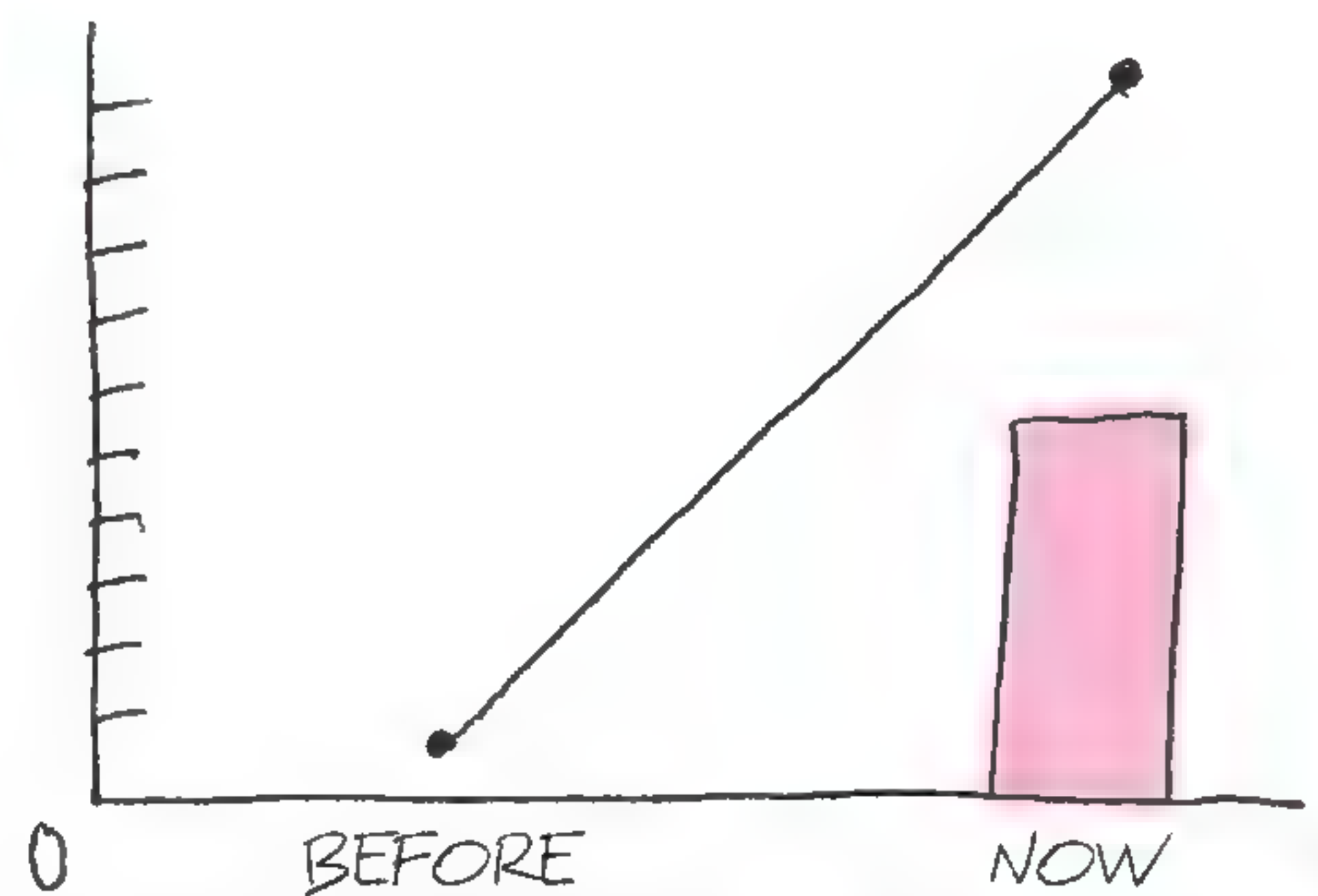
And ever since growing apart from my friends, however many years ago...



Meeting Unico made the lonely demon feel how hard isolation is.

I could relate to that-- warm interactions with friends made the pain of my solitude feel sharper than ever, and I could be hurt by it again.

INTERACTIONS
PAIN OF
SOLITUDE



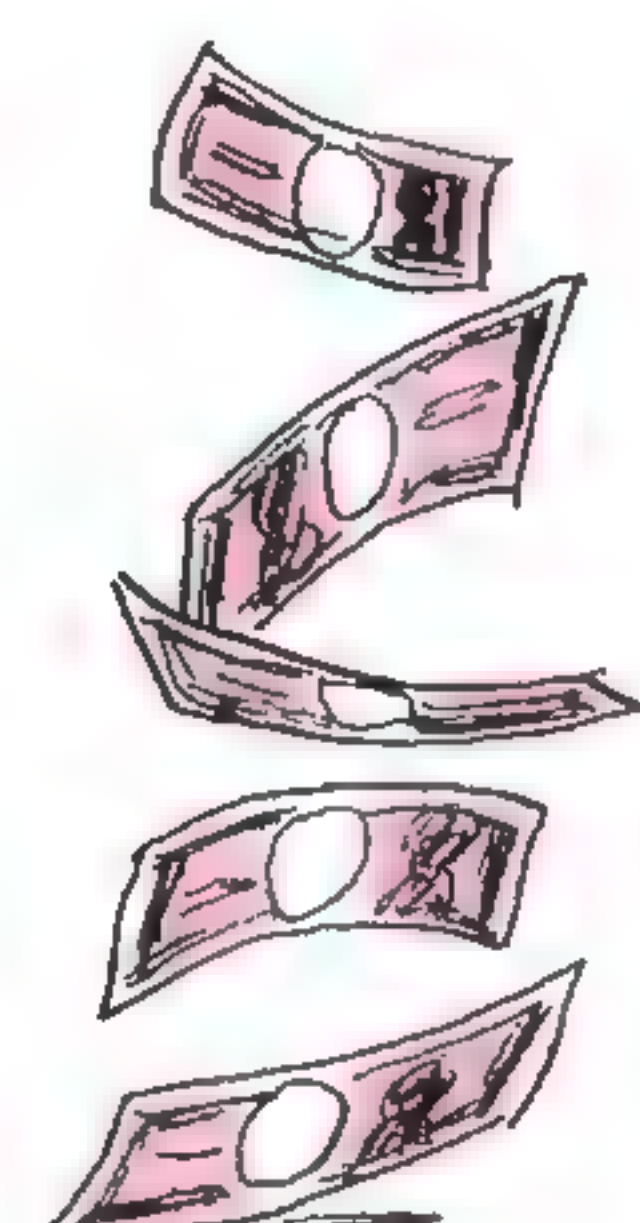
I was a little worried, but she read it for me since she hadn't yet.



I tried communicating that to my long-distance friend...

(100)
||
MENTAL
LONELINESS


||
MENTAL +
PHYSICAL
LONELINESS


ALWAYS
ALONE


FAMILY

I've said that
my physical
loneliness
(at work and
otherwise) is on
an entirely
different scale
from the
emotional
loneliness
with my family...

and the
loneliness
I discovered
after warm
interactions
with
friends.





Once you
know the pain
of those kinds
of solitude,
I guess you
can't run away
from it.

This hurts,
but I think
that's a
good thing.
Just please
try to be
less lonely
from this
point on.



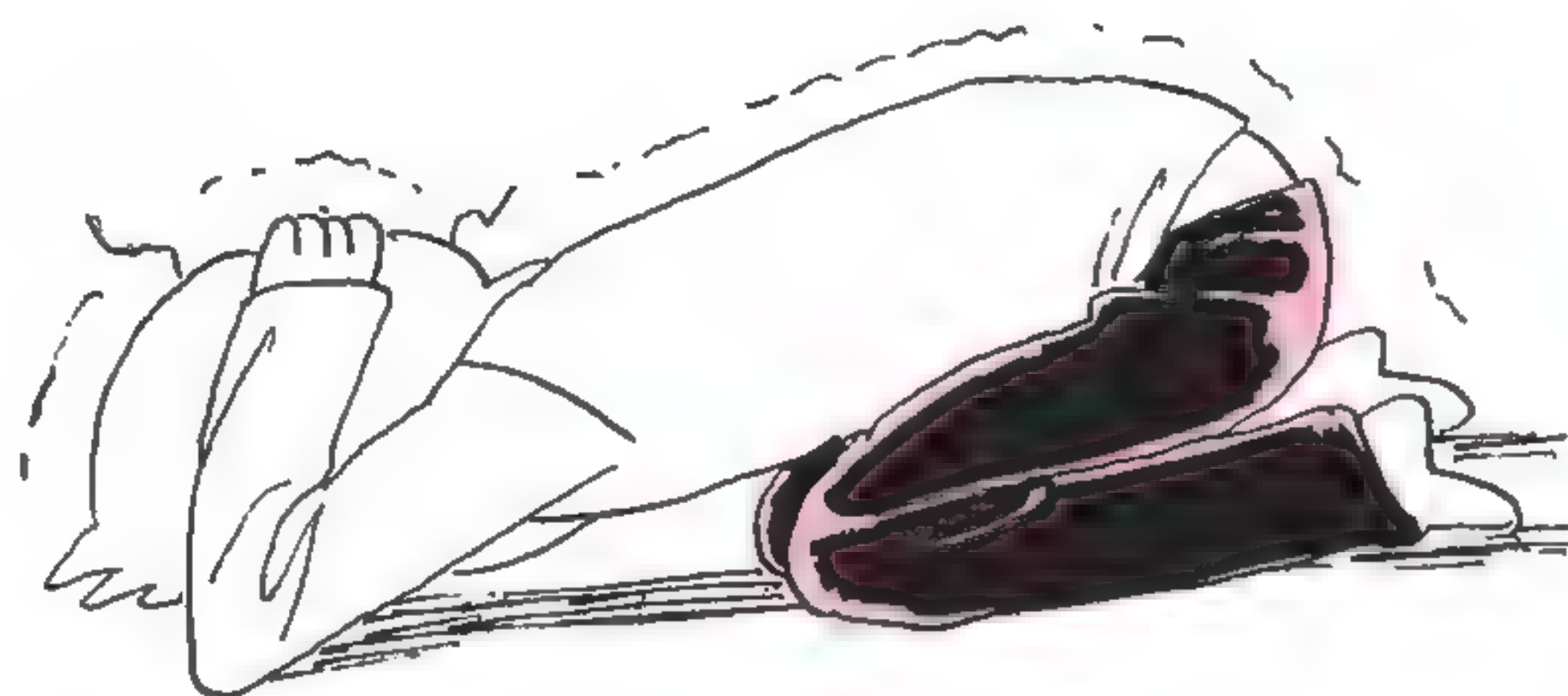
I'M
LONELY.
IT
HURTS.

Around
New Year's,
someone
unexpected
gave me what
I was looking
for. Listen
to this.



Dear
Nagata
Kabi...
This is
Nagata
Kabi.

and
I was
really
stuck.



It
was
January
third...



I couldn't
decide
when--
or if--
I should
go see my
family.

To go
or not
to go?



My aunt,
cousins,
and mom
were all
gathered
at my
mother's
parents'
house.

I used to fantasize a lot about what that would be like.



When I was working part-time, I realized there could be a me who wasn't pathetic or embarrassing my parents at family gatherings.

I became self-aware about that, and the thought just kept crawling into my brain. I couldn't stop.



AGH! I'M THINKING ABOUT IT AGAIN!

I'd been either a part-timer or unemployed since dropping out of college-- I didn't have a career to speak of. I was pathetic.

I felt sorry for my parents too, because that stuff reflected on them. I was just really bad with big family events like New Year's.



I was
overwhelmed
with how
badly
I wanted
my parents'
approval,
for some
reason.



That
evening,
I **did**
decide
to go.



WHAT'LL
I DO IF
THEY
DON'T
LET ME
IN?

I'M
SCARED.

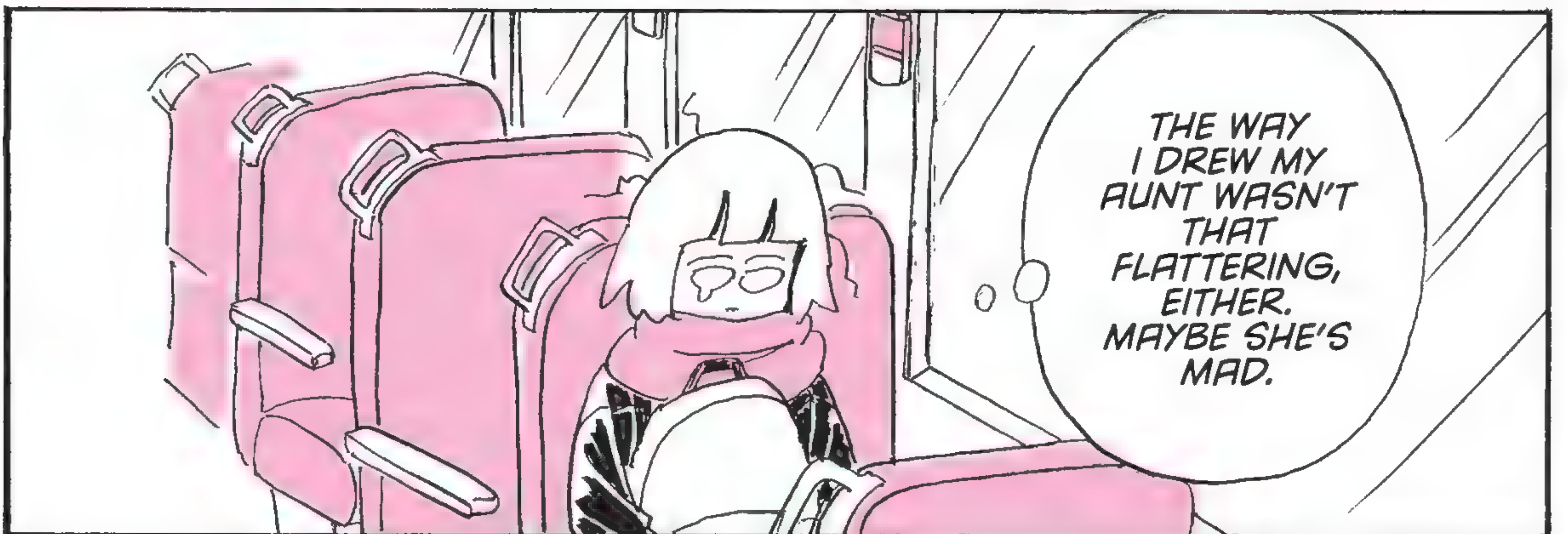
I'M
NER-
VOUS.

I
WANNA
GO!!

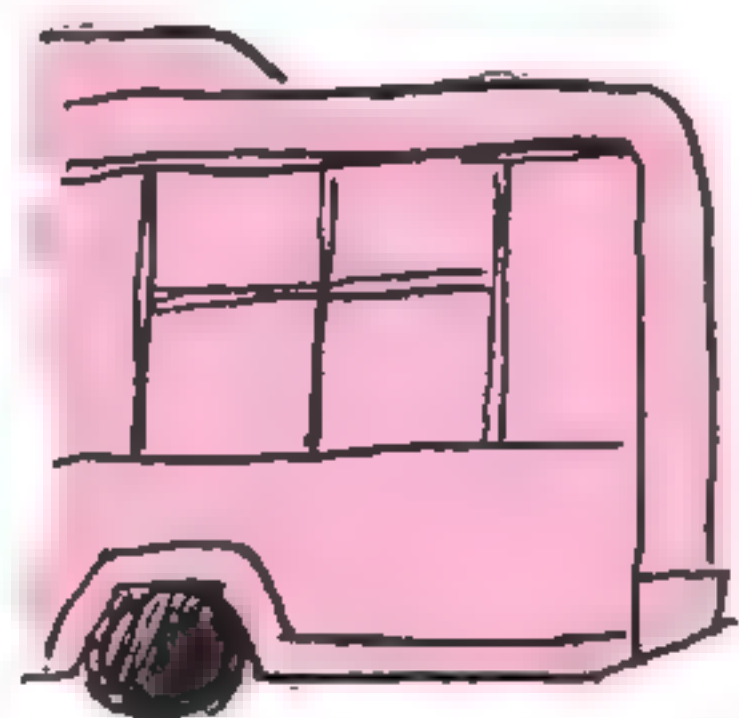
I CAN
FINALLY
HOLD
MY HEAD
UP HIGH,
RIGHT?

BUT
I'M NOT
A PART-
TIMER OR
UNEMPLOYED
THIS YEAR.
I'VE GOT
TWO
BOOKS
OUT...





BE
THERE?



CAN I
REALLY...

NO
ANSWER...

DING-
DOOONG

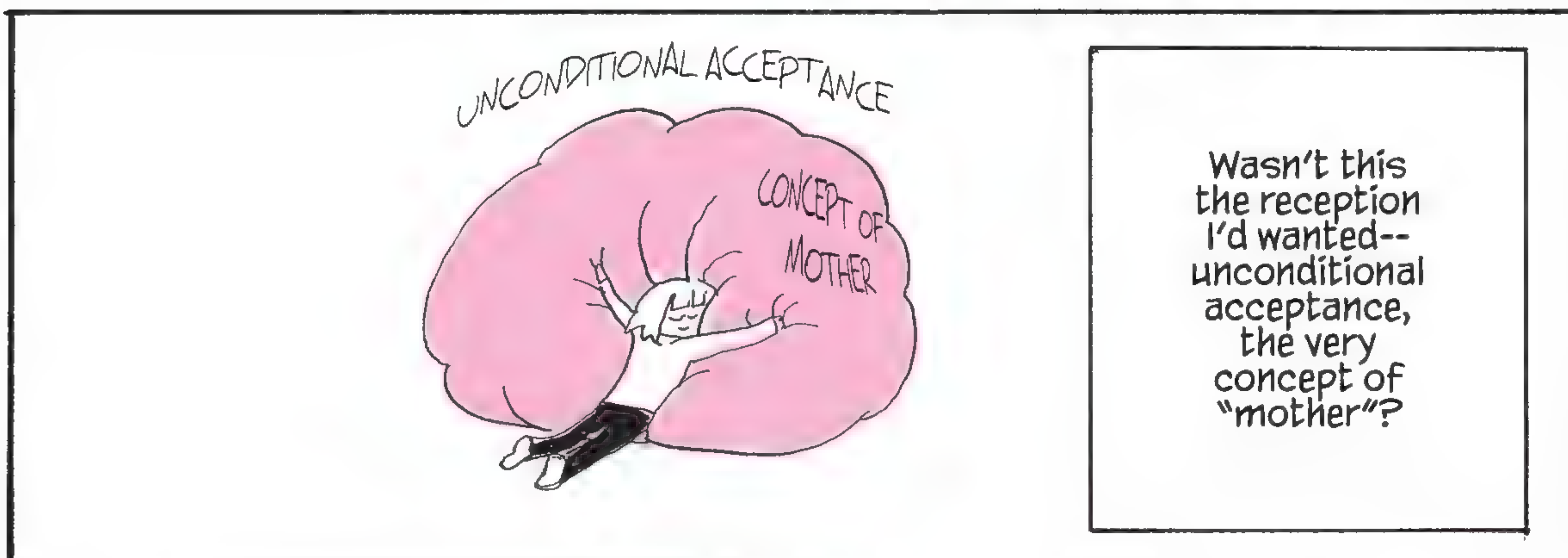
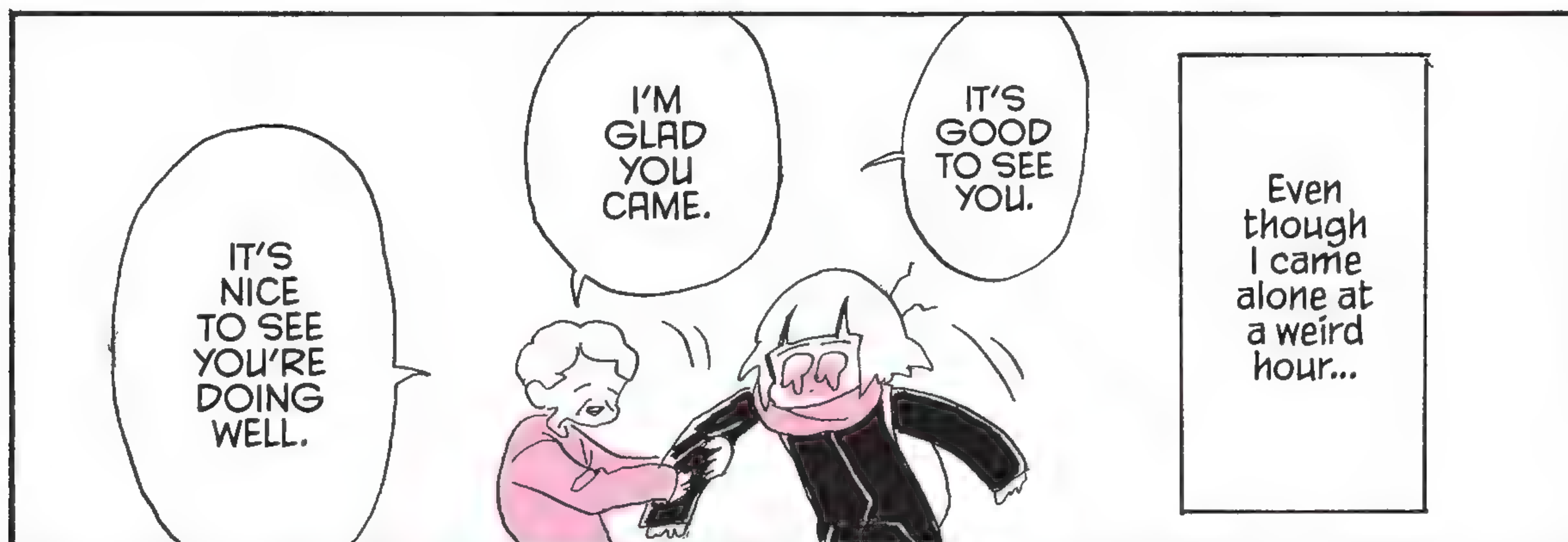
DING-
DOOONG

Yeah,
so...

OH.
EVERY-
ONE'S
GONE
HOME
ALREADY.

My
grandmother
came to
the door
after a
minute,
looking
surprised.

after
all
that, I
missed
them.



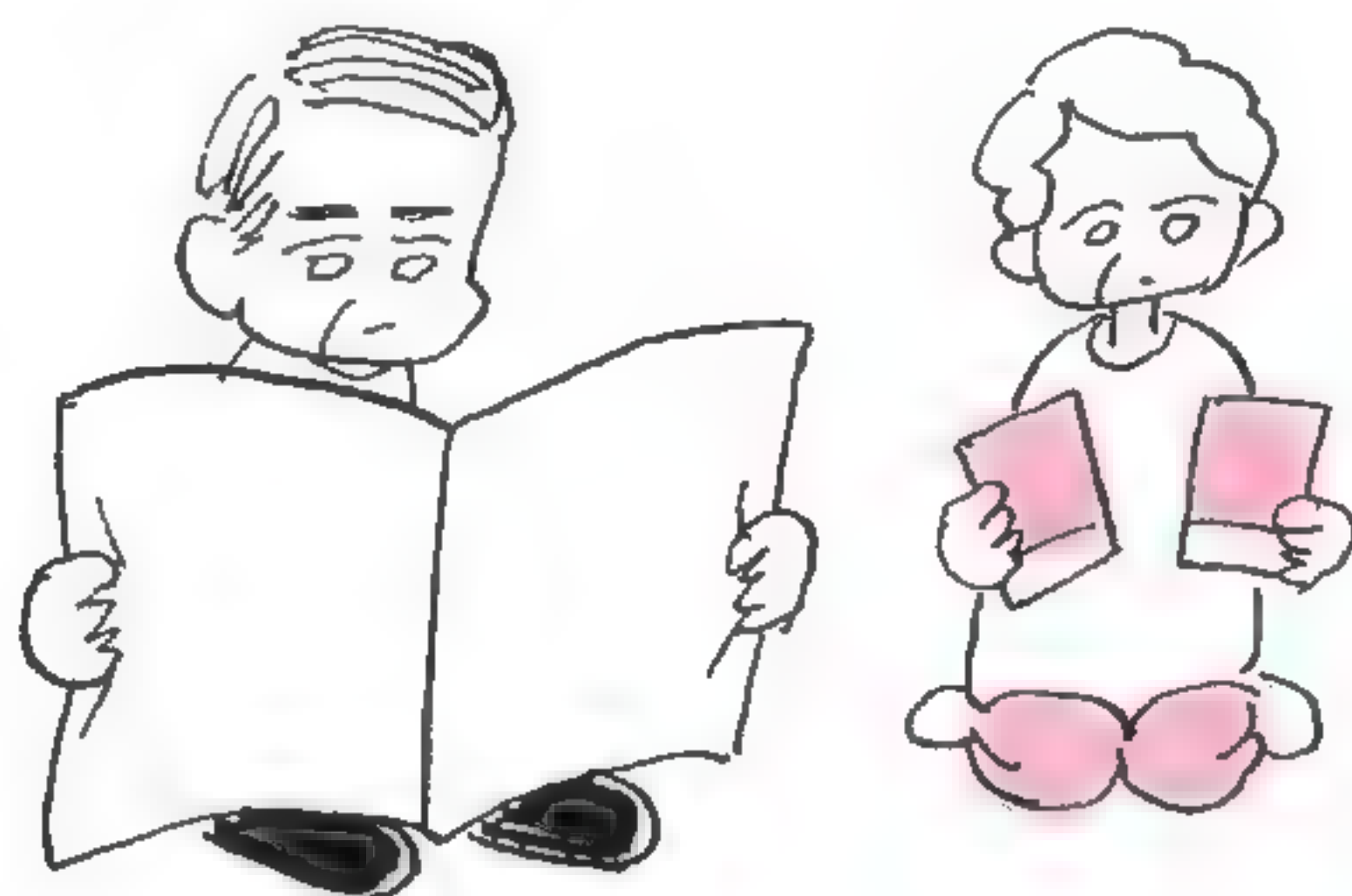


I couldn't believe the person giving me the thing I'd never stopped wanting was my maternal grandmother. I'd never been very good with her.



The thing I wanted was right in front of me and I'd just been looking the other way.

I'd been told that I couldn't show my books to my grandparents.



But thanks to an article in the paper my grandparents read, they'd had both books sent to their house.

She skipped over the subject matter of my work and was just plain *happy* for me, congratulating me on doing them at all.



SUCH
MAGNI-
FICENT
BOOKS.

YOU
MUST
HAVE
WORKED
SO
HARD TO
MAKE...

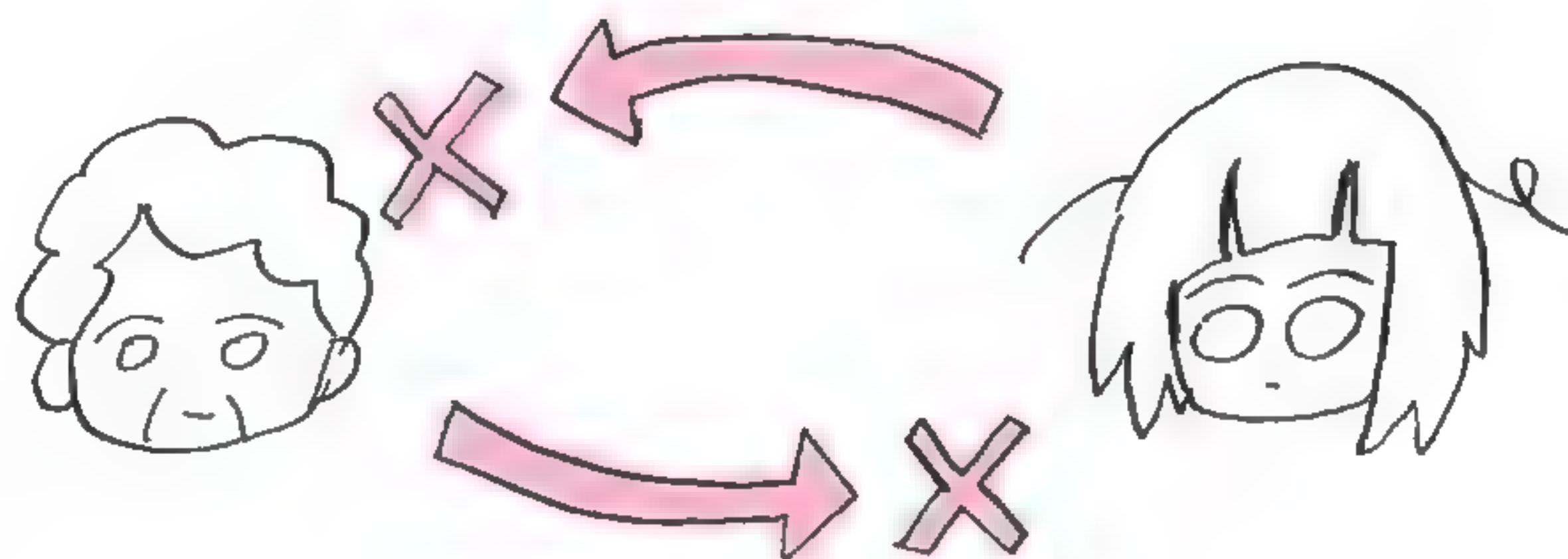


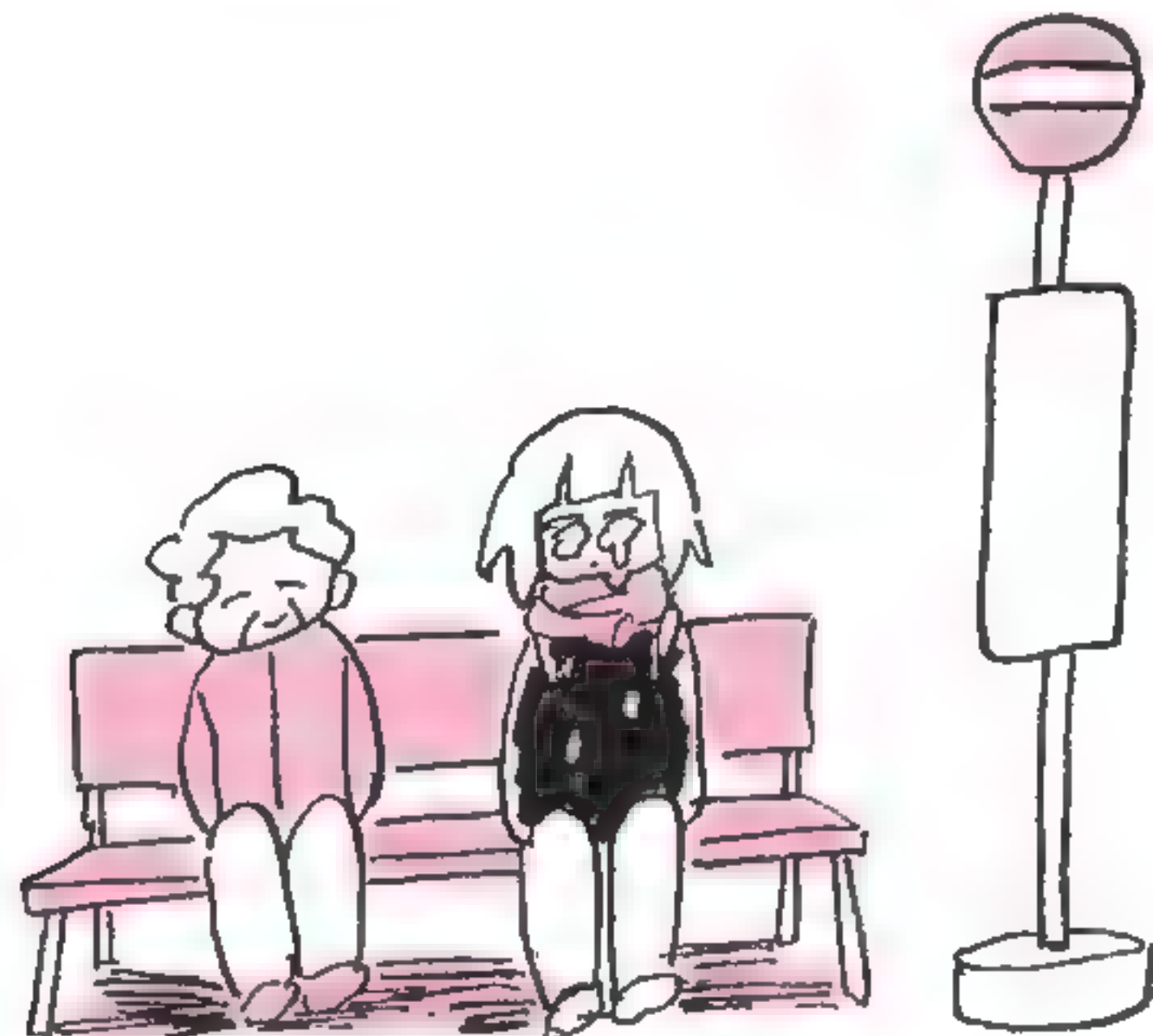
This was the reaction I'd selfishly wanted from the people close to me.

I still wasn't that great with her, but she gave me two things I'd been searching for...and I couldn't stop crying for the longest time.



I didn't know how to be with her, and I'd been convinced I couldn't do anything for her--so I hadn't been able to accept anything from her, either.





Still
in tears,
I waited
for the
bus
with my
grand-
mother
at my
side.

She
waved
goodbye...
and
I went
home.

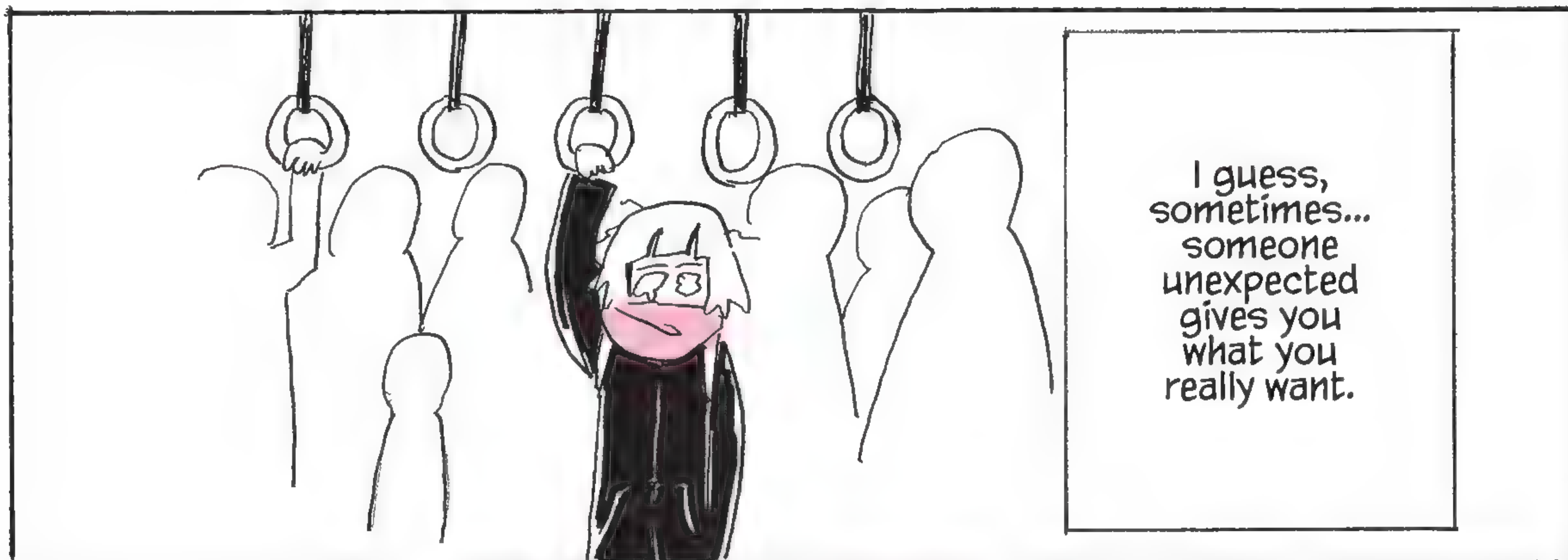


My mom
emailed
me to
say my
grandmother
had called
them.

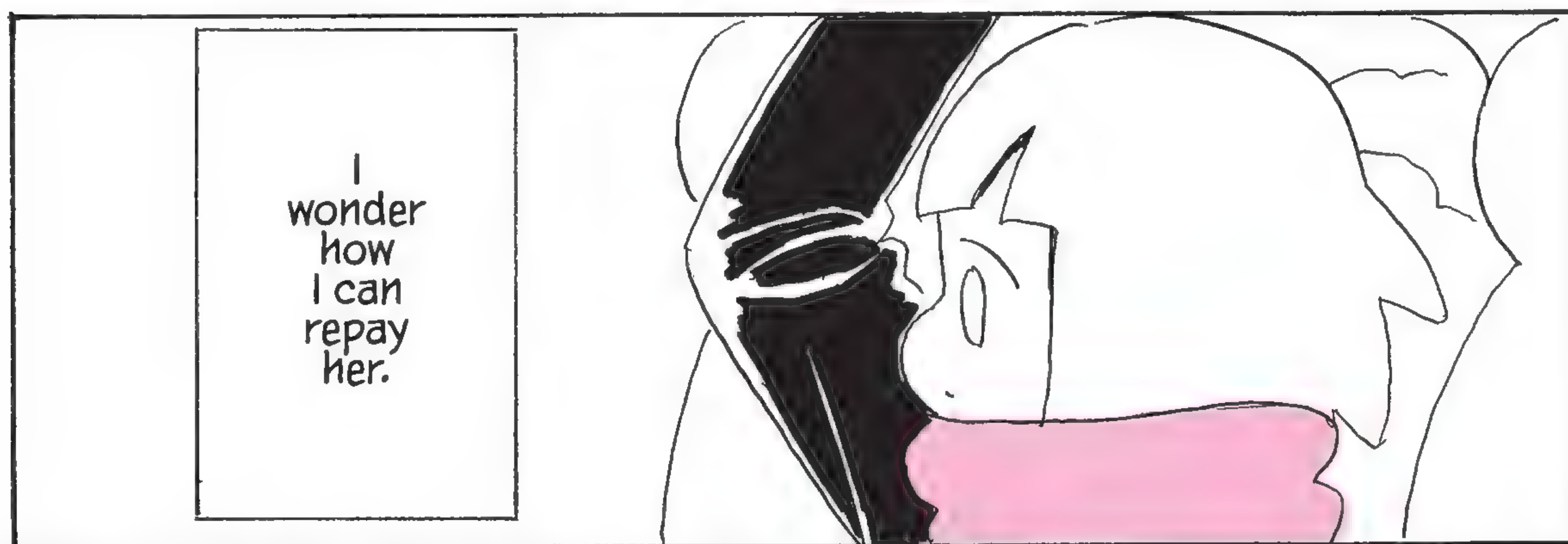


It didn't
seem like
she
was *mad*,
at least,
so I was
relieved
and
grateful.

FROM: MOM
THANKS FOR LETTING
HER SEE YOU DOING
SO WELL.



I guess,
sometimes...
someone
unexpected
gives you
what you
really want.



I
wonder
how
I can
repay
her.



And
some day,
I want
you to be
able to
approve of
yourself,
too.



I feel like
that's when
you'll be
able to pay
her back.
So keep
working
on it.

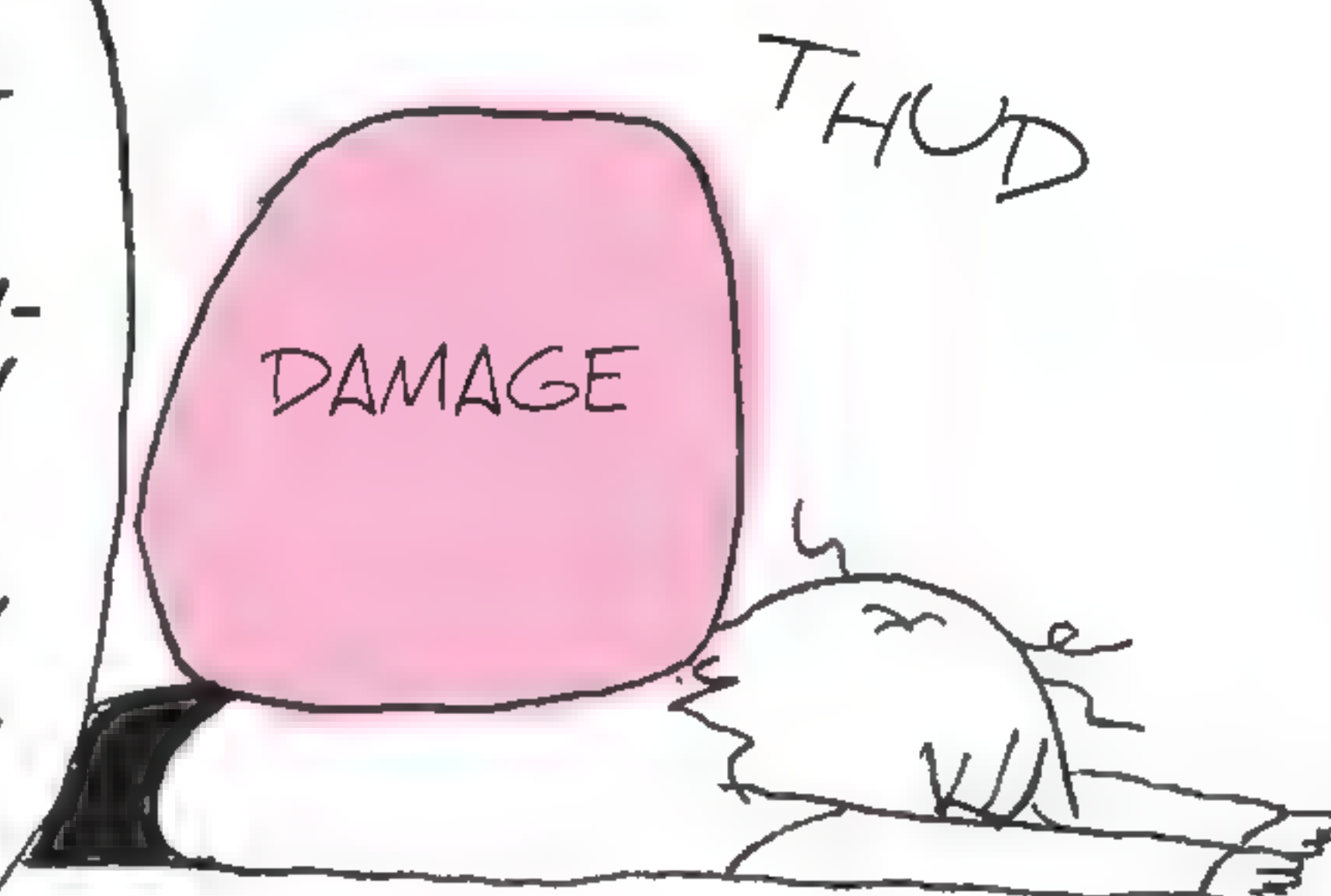
After this entry, the series will be going on a brief hiatus.



Now... I have something to report.

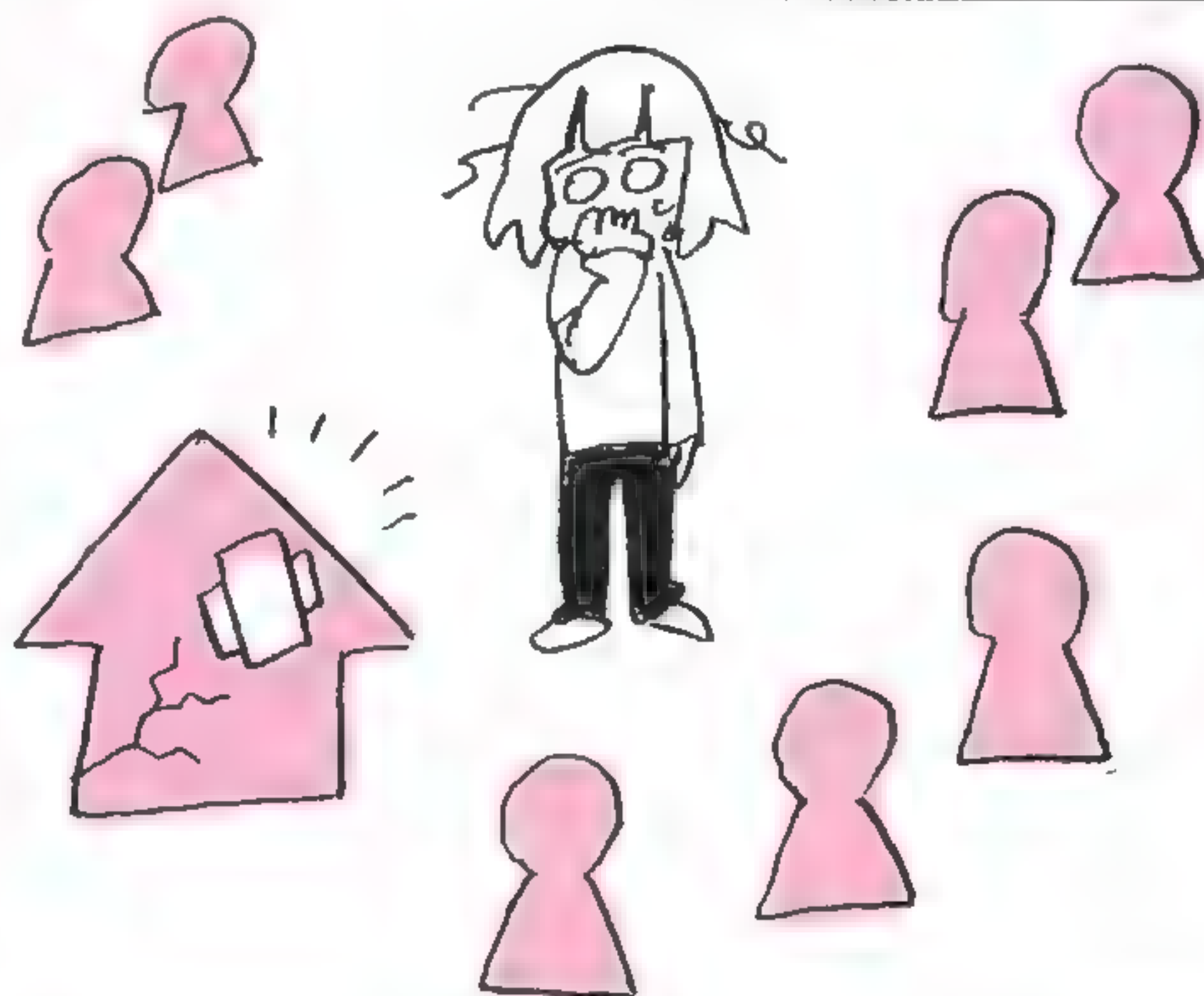
I DON'T REGRET IT, BUT...

I THINK DOING ALL THIS HAS HURT MY PRODUCTIVITY AND MY FAMILY. IT WAS BASICALLY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.



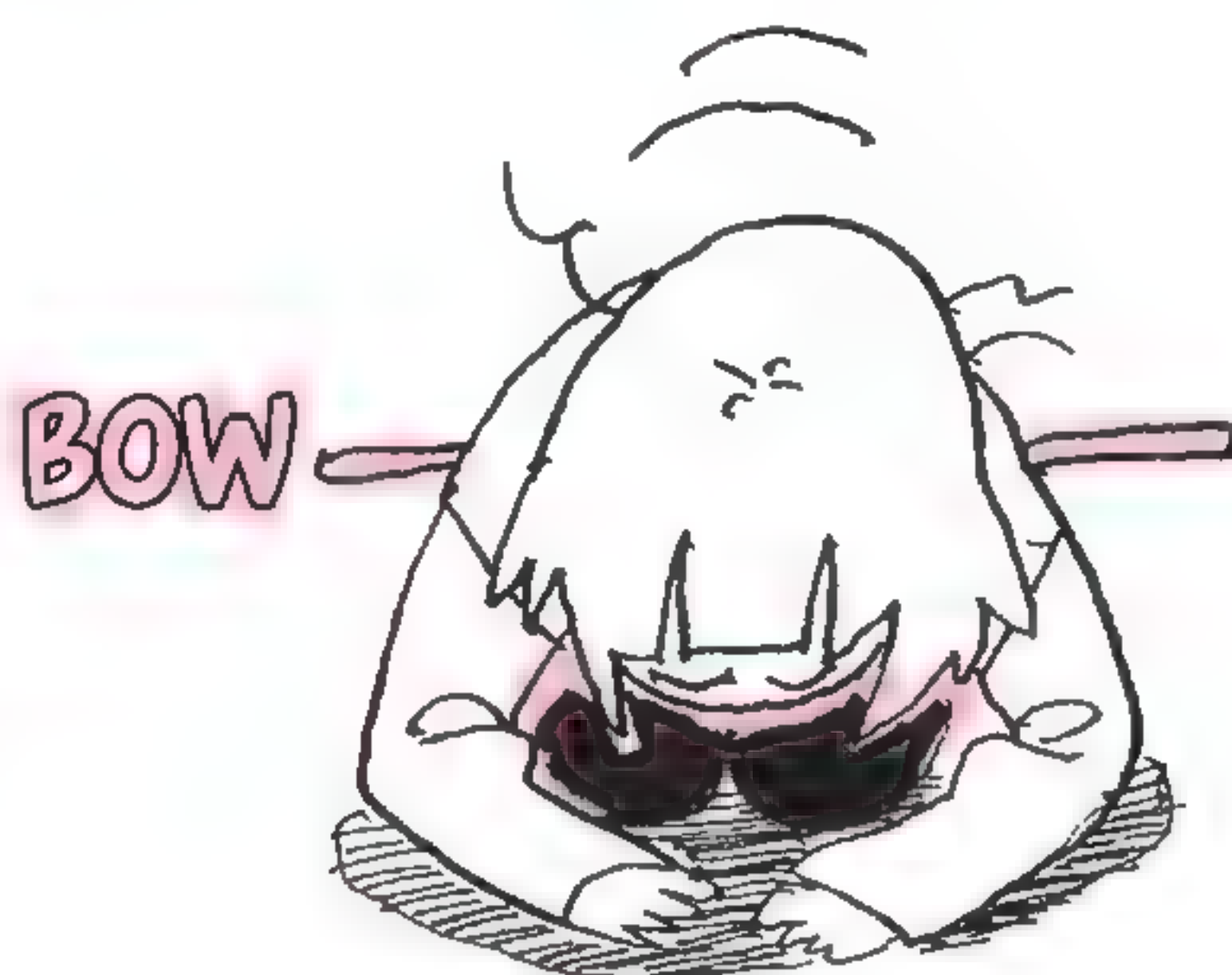
In a bit of a delayed reaction, the damage from selling myself and my family one piece at a time has come crashing down on me.

Those are the main reasons for this hiatus.



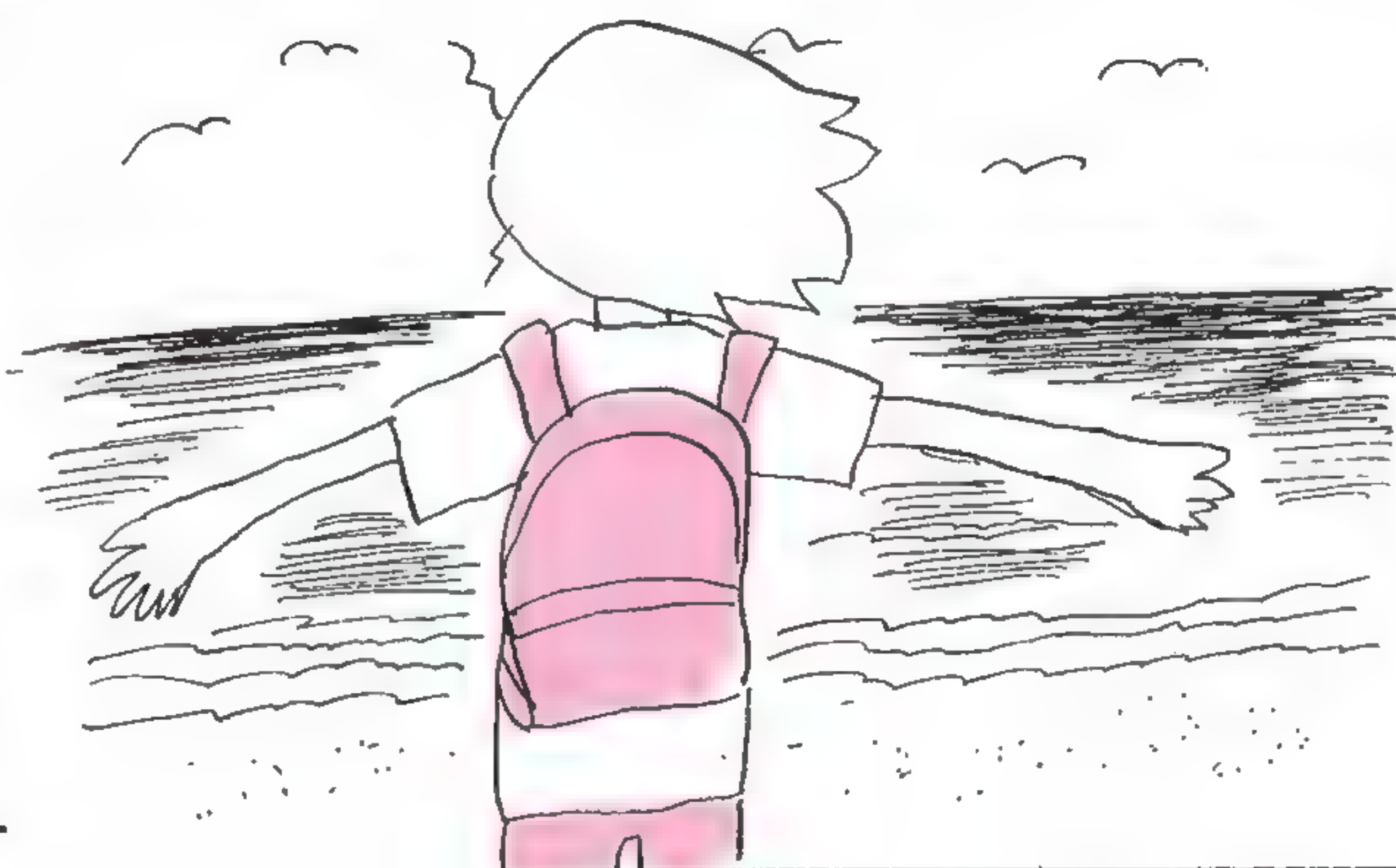
my family and other people involved might understand that though I draw from my subjective viewpoint, I still hurt them.

I hope you'll read me again when I do.



I'm sure my fingers will be itching to draw in no time, so I'll come back soon enough.

During the break, I didn't do anything major to recharge myself, like take a trip.



It's been a long time, huh? This is Nagata Kabi.

I'm doing my solo exchange diary again.

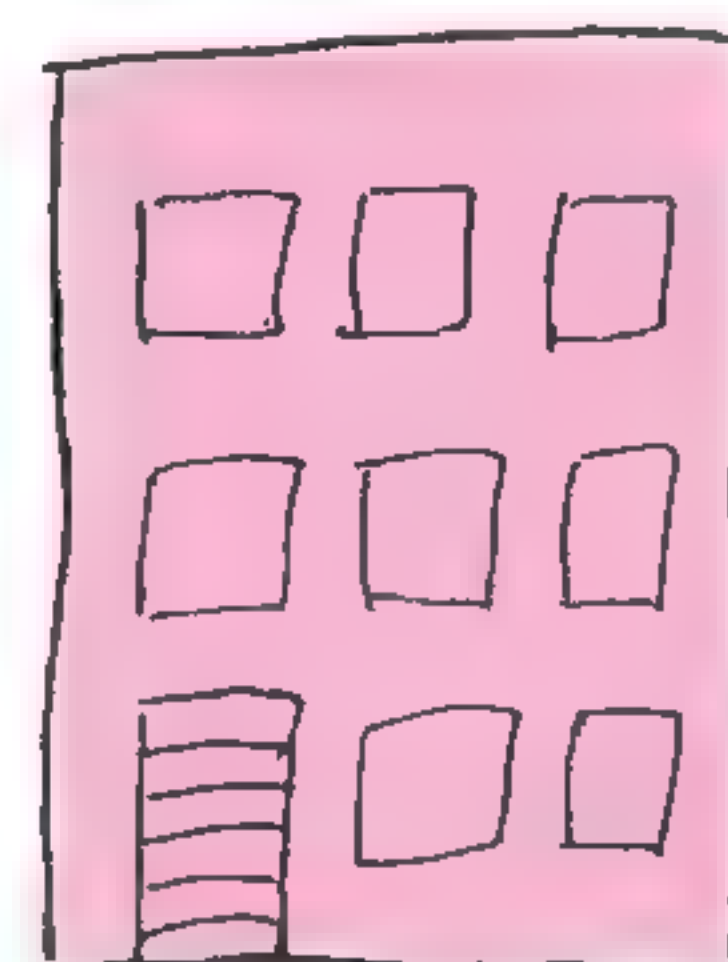
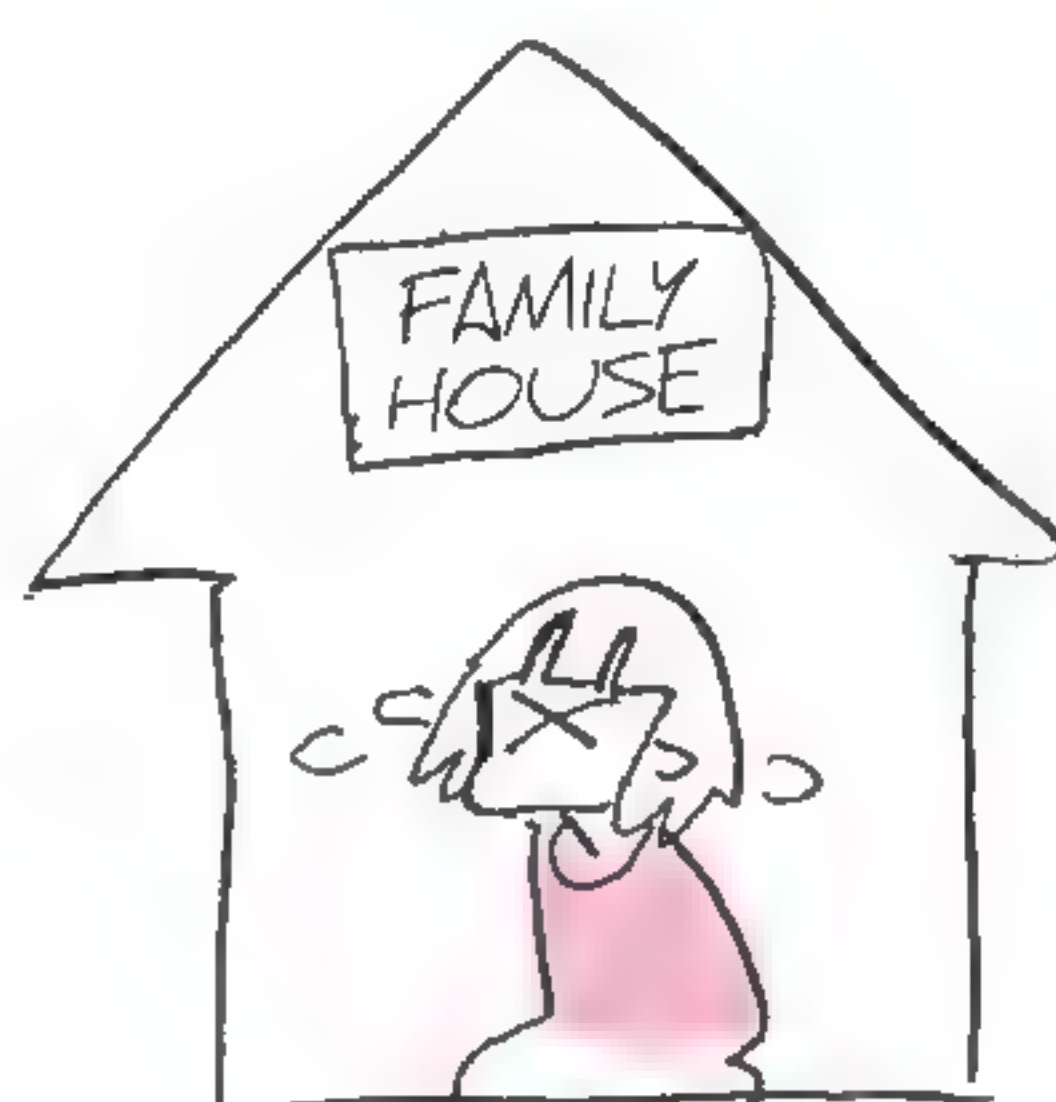


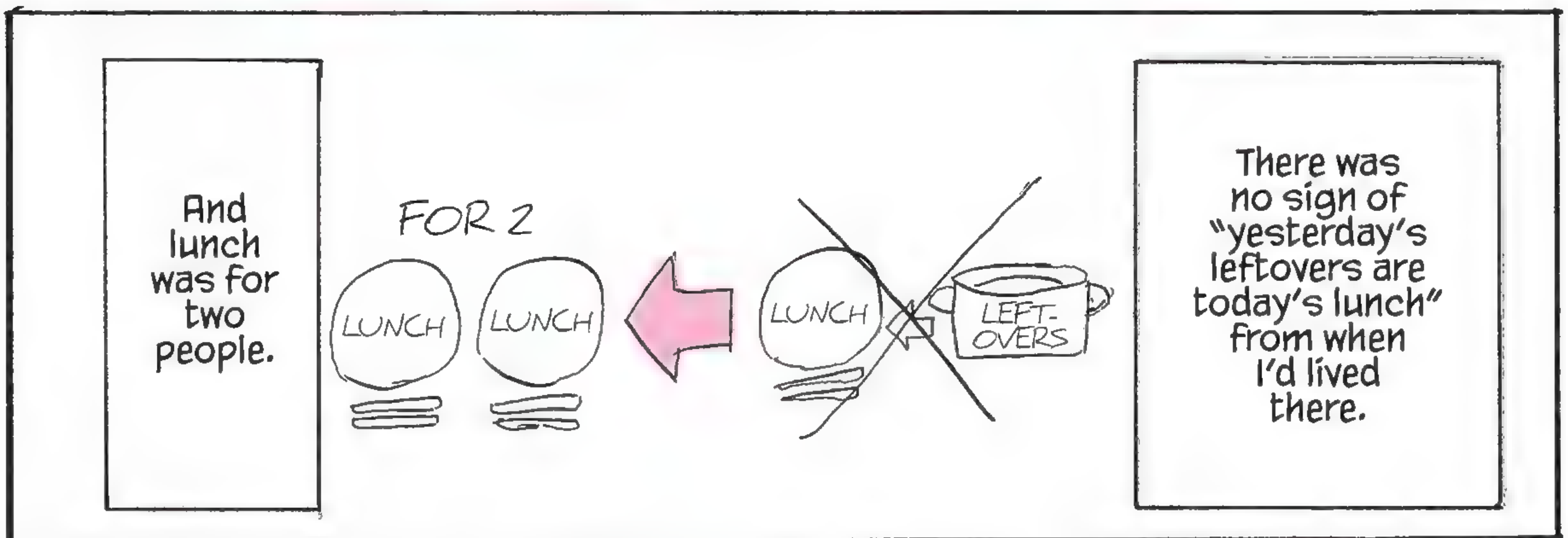
And now, with all the buzzing energy of a baseball game waiting for the rain to stop...



I'm going to start by going back in time, if you don't mind. Back to when it was still cold out...

I couldn't stand my loneliness anymore, so I ended up staying at my parents' house awhile.





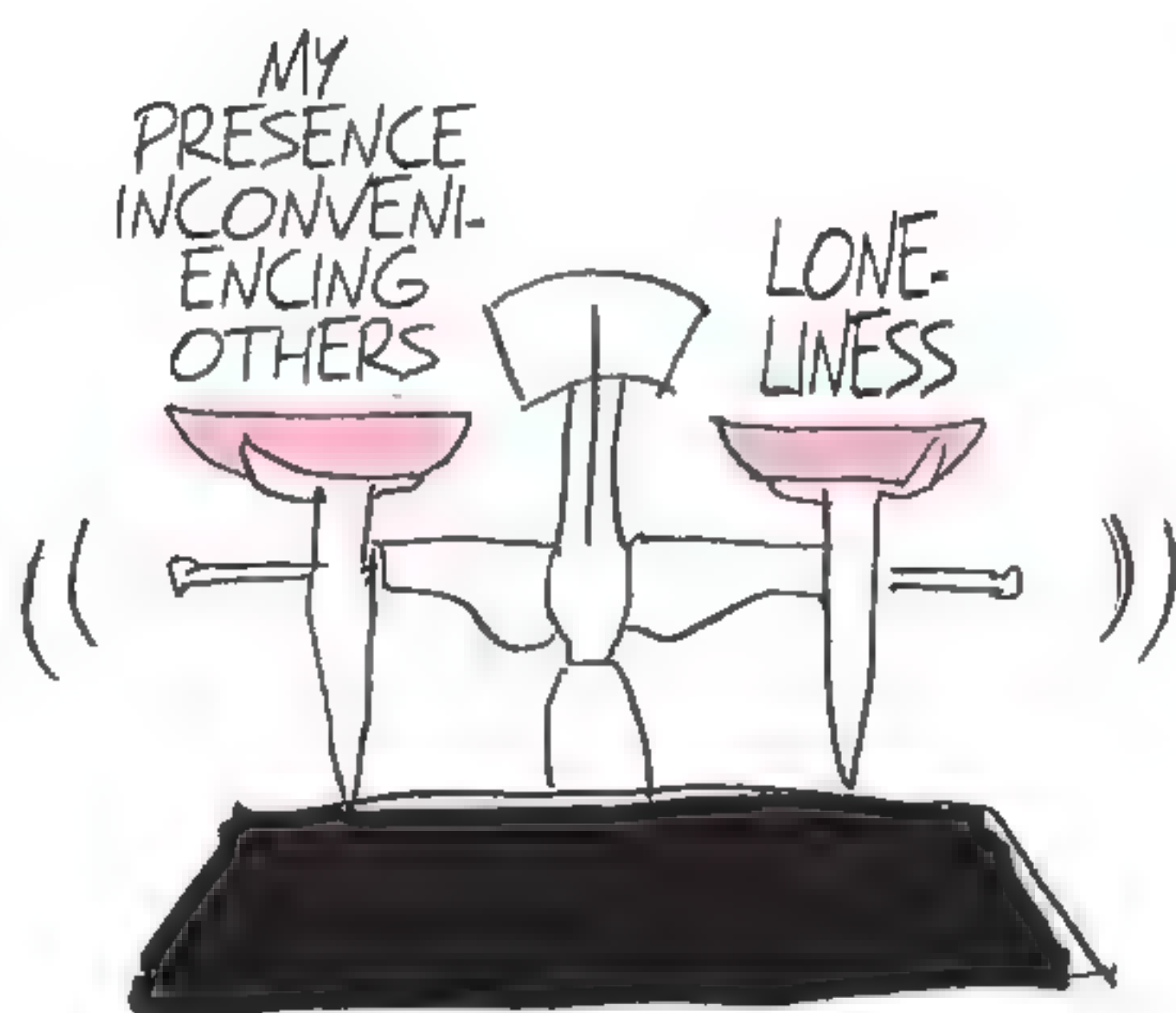


I belatedly struggled with this realization-- that I was a burden on others. I felt like my own existence was too much for me to handle.

I had that thought when living alone, too. Is the existence of a *single human being* such a bulky thing?



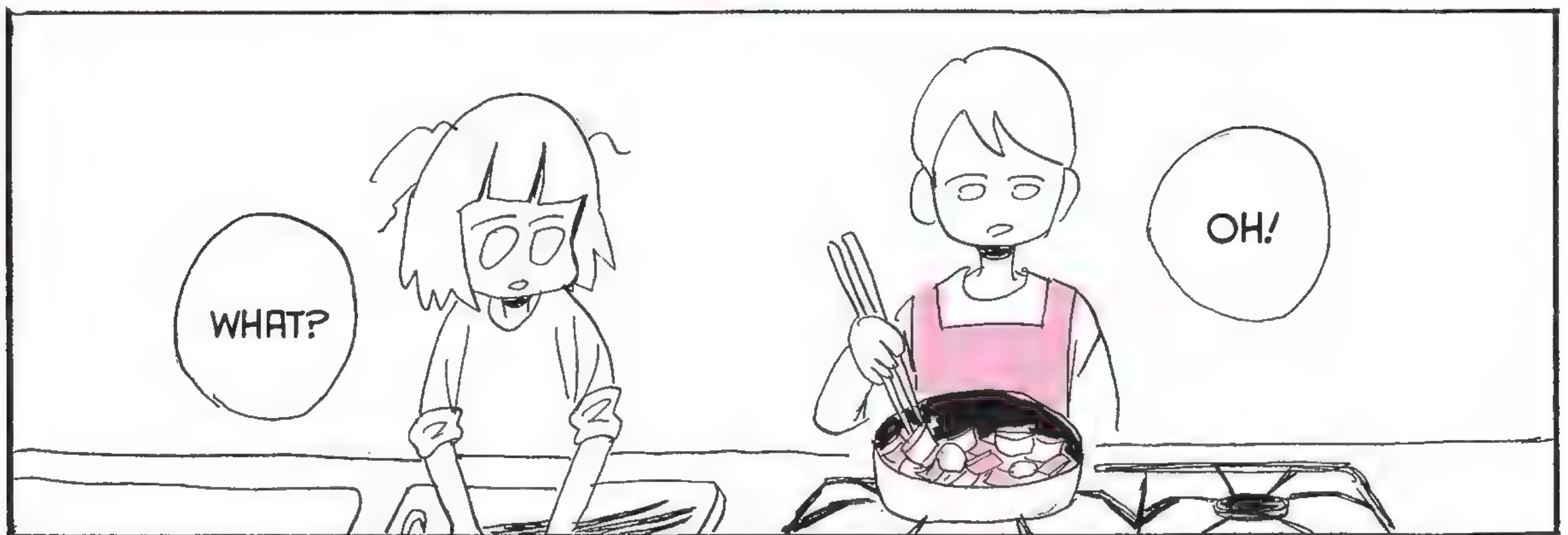
I put the loneliness of living by myself (always physically alone) on a scale against the inconvenience my existence caused other people.



That burden was clunky and awkward whether I lived alone or stayed at my parents' place... but when I lived alone, I was the only one carrying it.

I didn't know what to do. What was better.

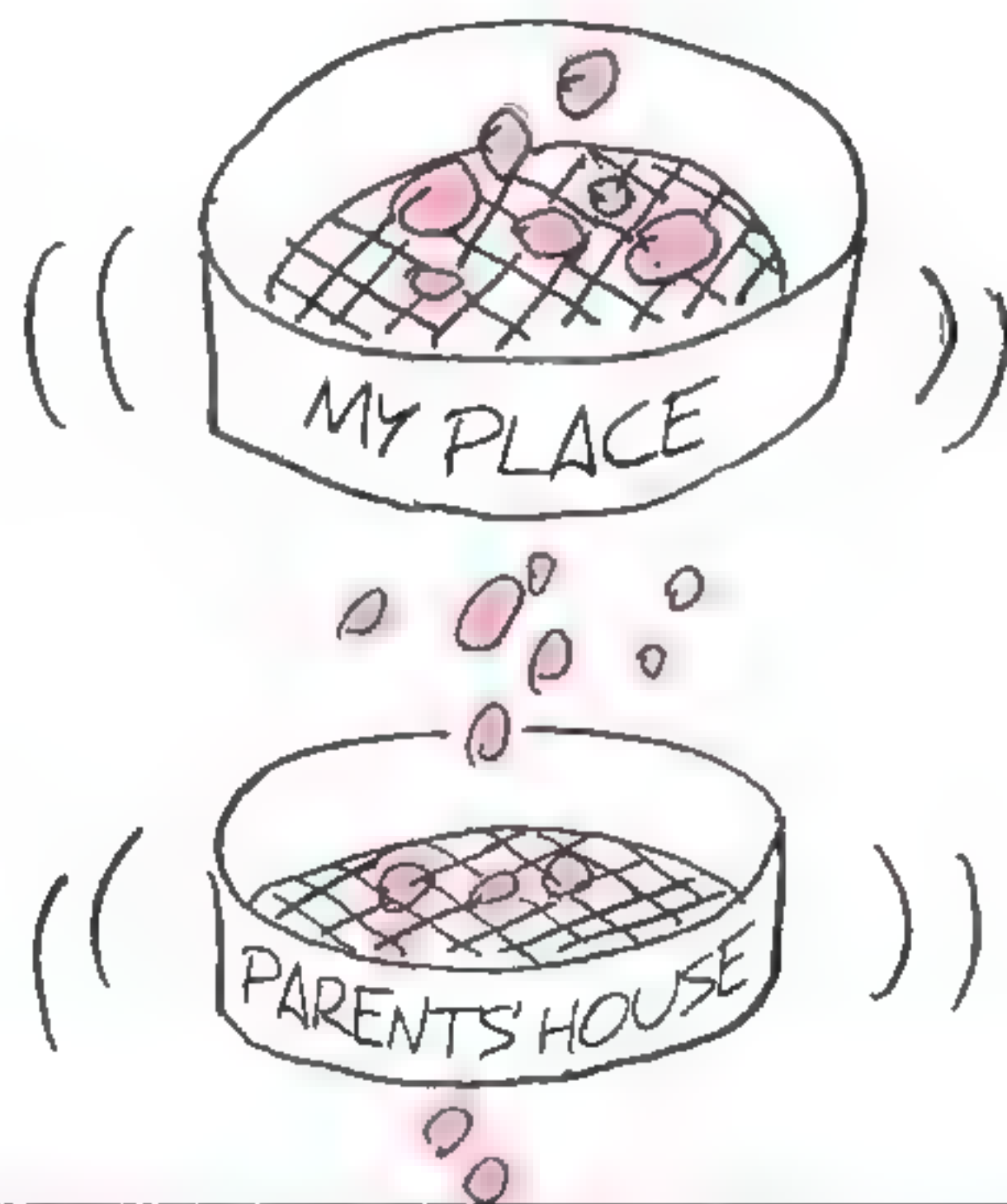




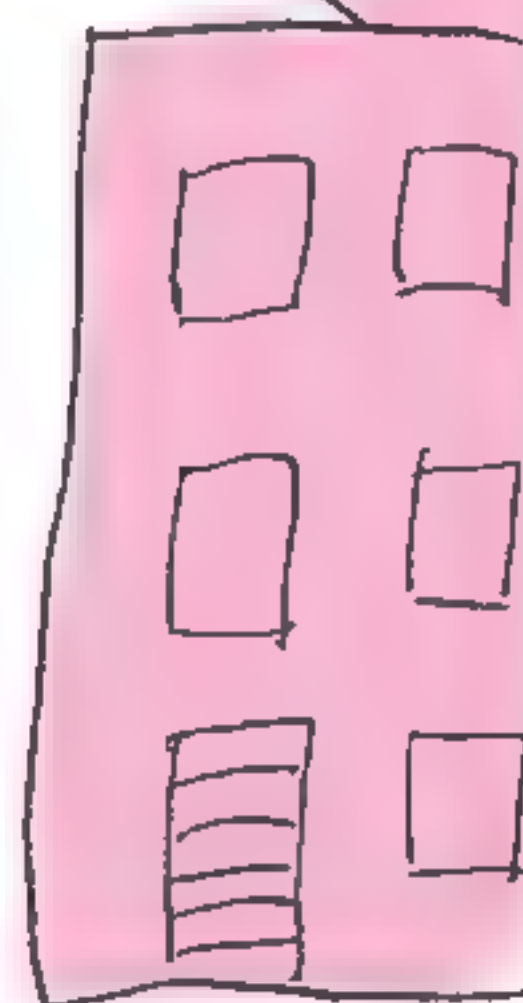
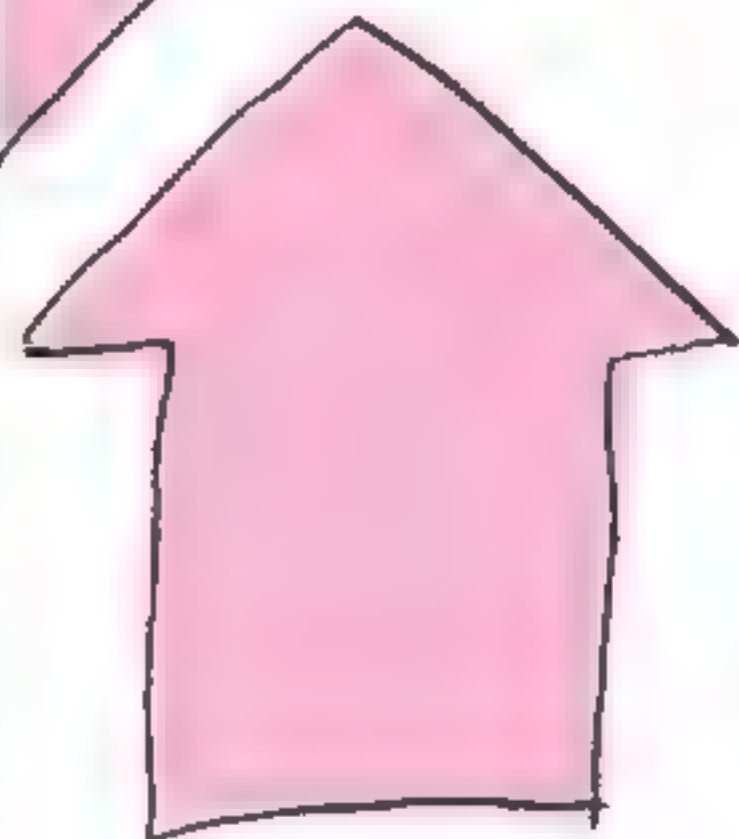


I started bouncing back and forth between my place and my parents' house.

The days were sprinkled with sadness and struggles, no matter where I was.



Where exactly did I belong?

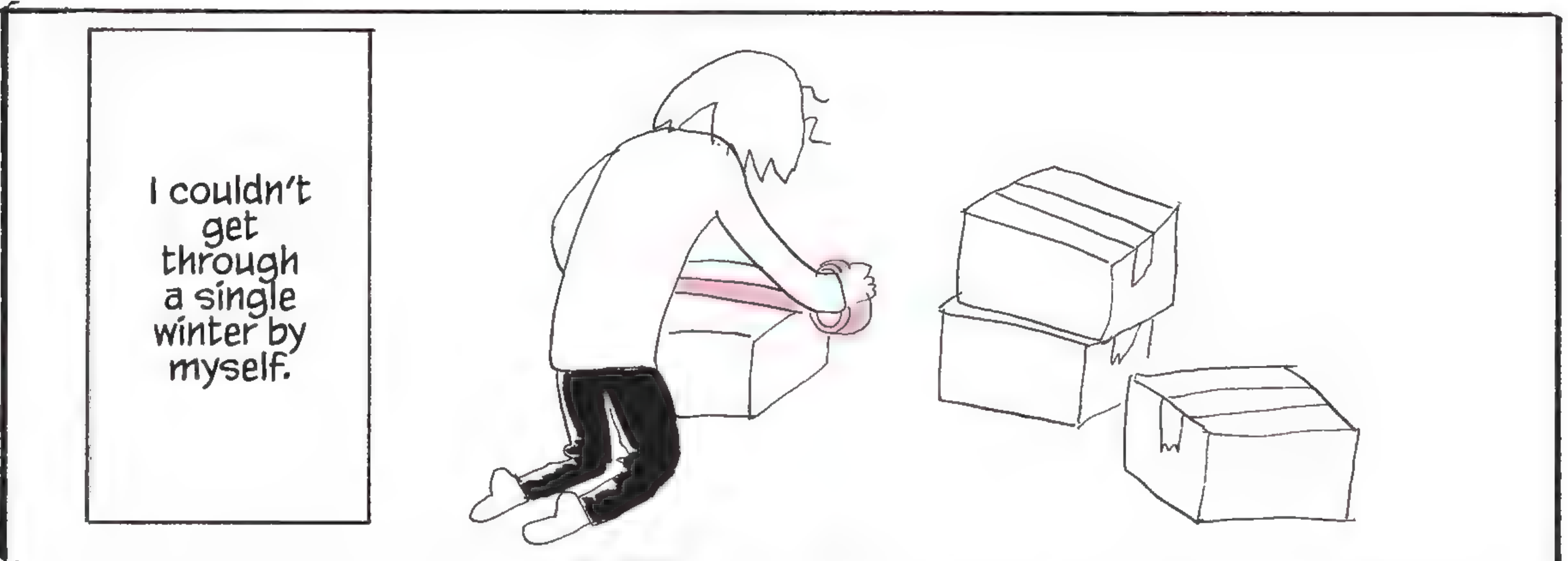
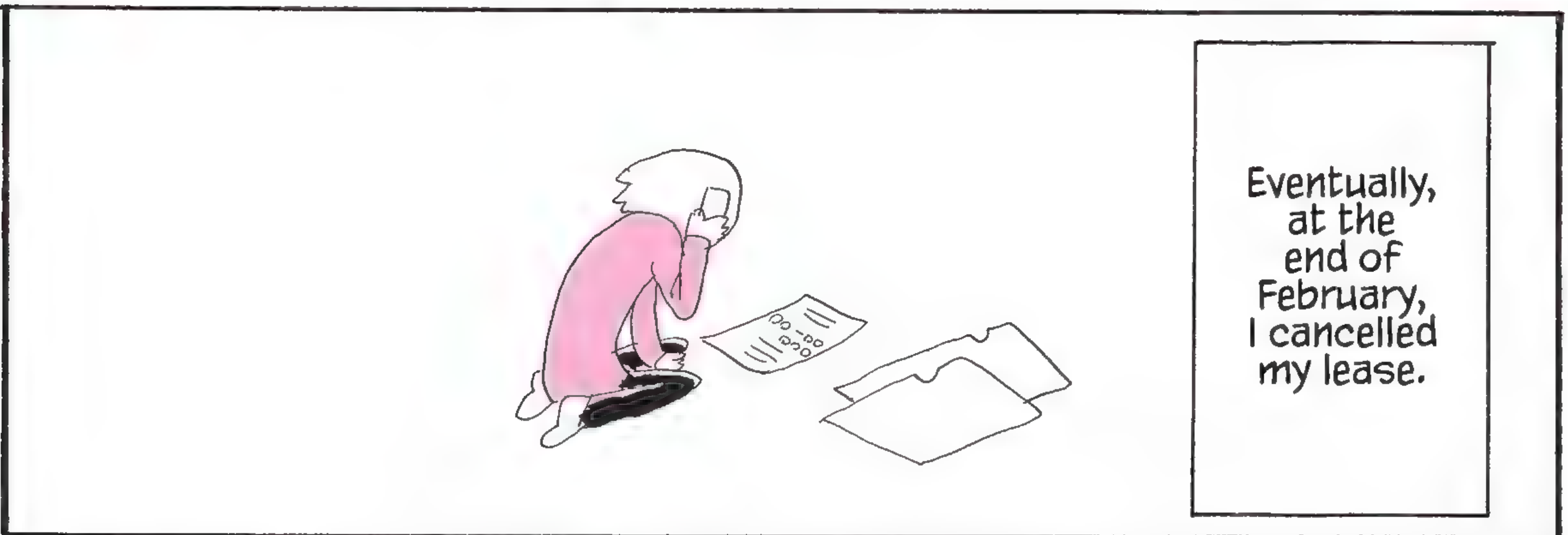


What did I consider "home"-- my place, or my parents' house? Were they both home? Were neither?

NOTHING



I was independent at my place, with money I earned from doing work I wanted to do, but I still had no sense of achievement. I didn't feel fulfilled.



Like my
own place, the
independent
life I'd wanted
so badly...
even the
purpose of
the appliances
I'd bought...



Loneliness
breaks
things.
It steals
things.

At least
it felt
like I'd
lost to
something
really
strong.



It
couldn't
really be
fought,
but I
still felt
like
I'd lost.



I wonder
what's
gonna
happen
to me.

Nagata
Kabi,
where
are you
now?



My parents' reaction is still dragging me down, and the book's still too much for me to handle. I've come back here again.



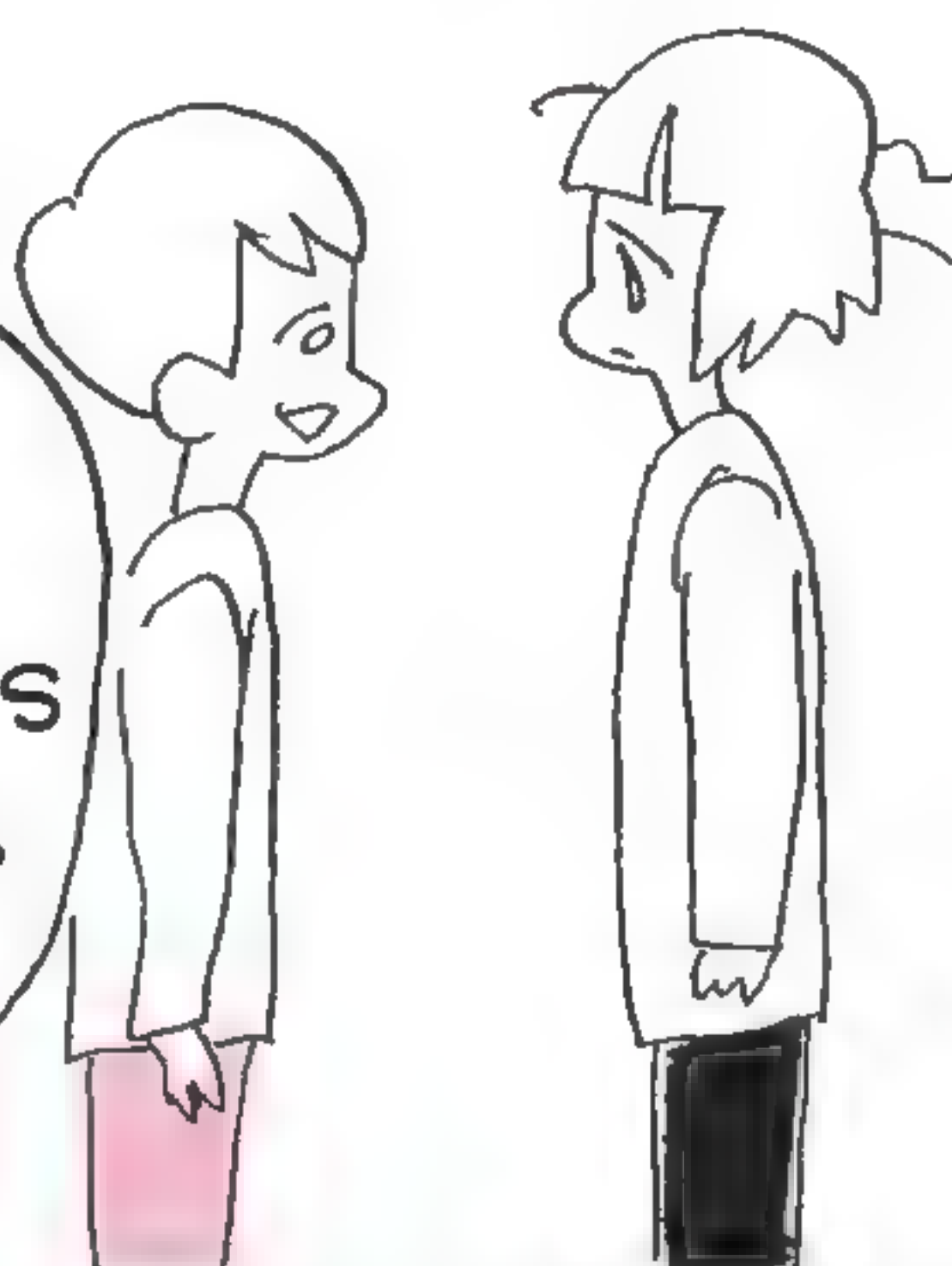
Dear Nagata Kabi... It's been a year since my first book came out.

I mean, it's not like I *wanted* to show it to my mom.

I EVEN USED THE BOOK'S PUBLICATION AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR MOVING OUT.

She asked for it over and over, so I finally showed her.

SHOW ME WHEN IT'S DONE, OKAY?



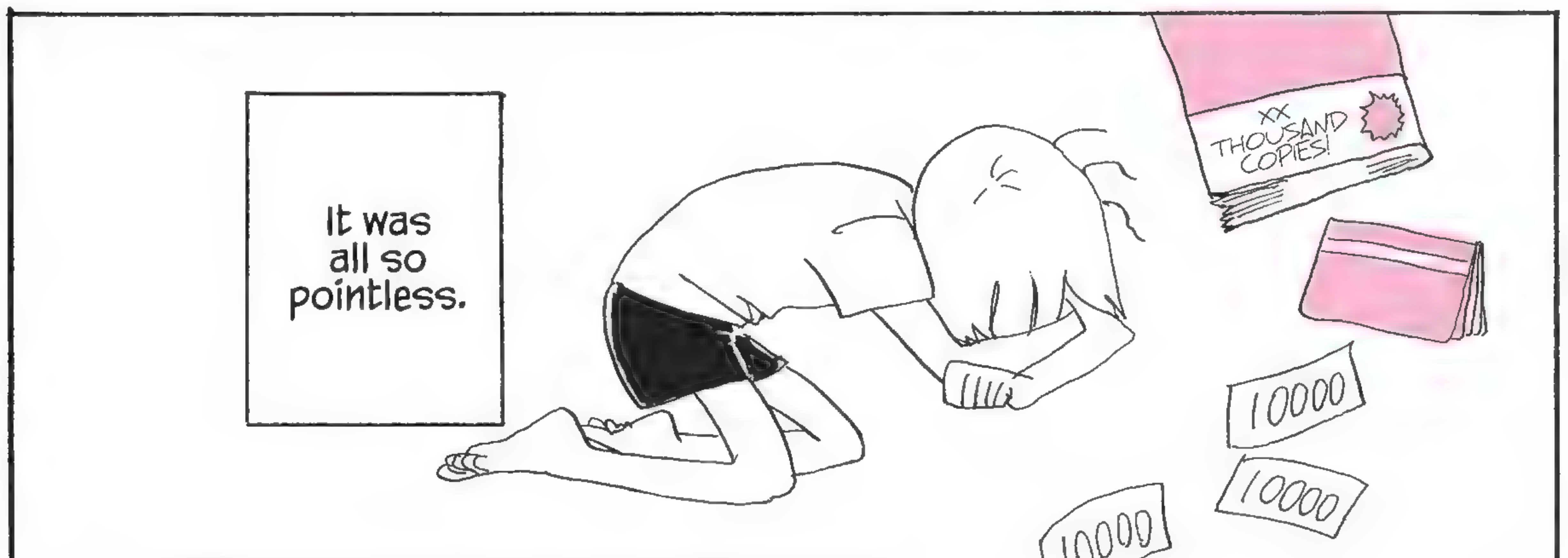
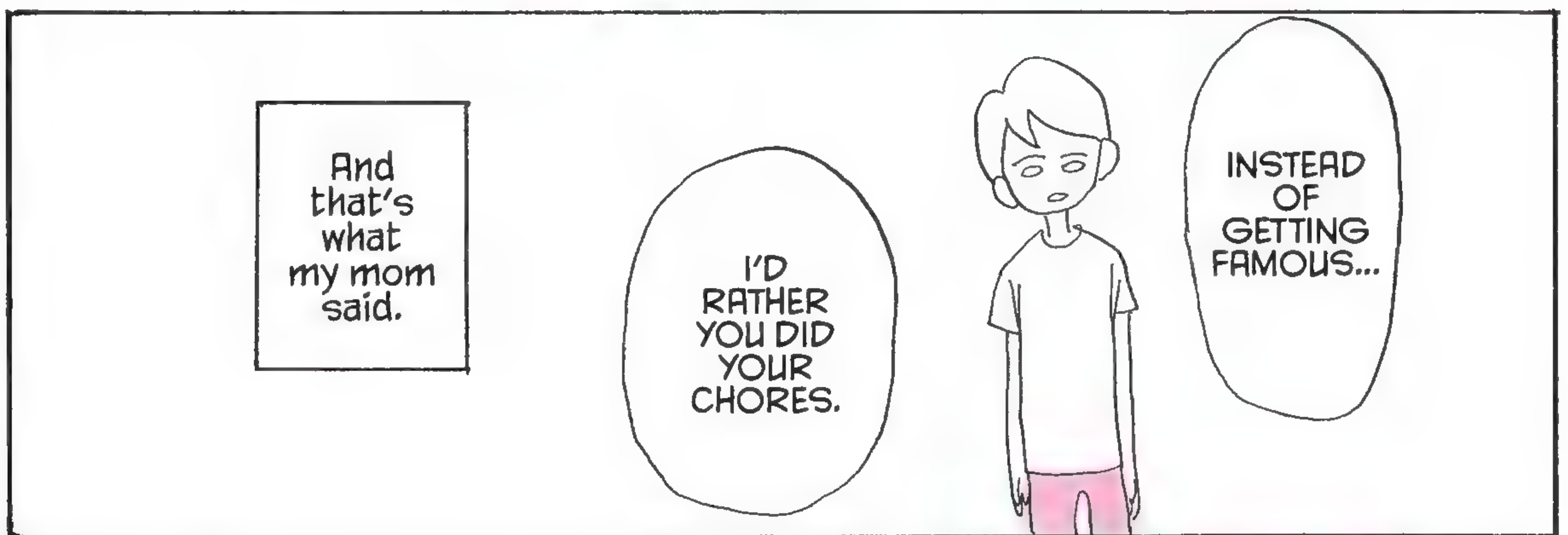
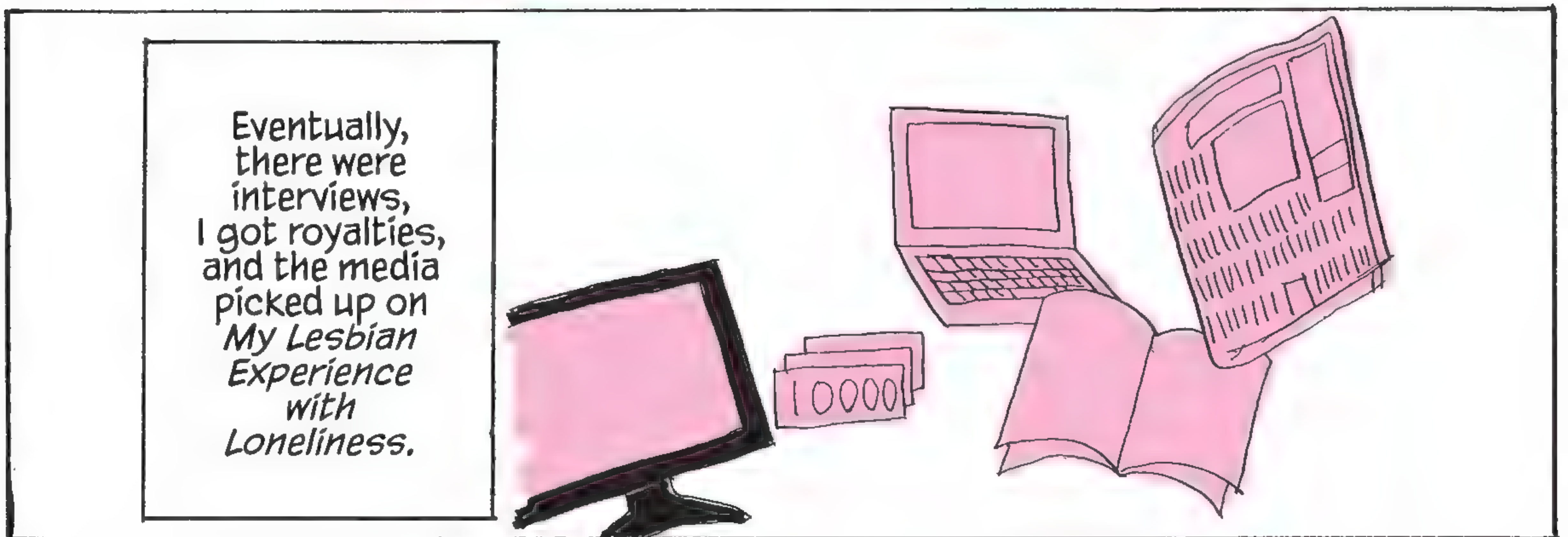
SHOW ME WHEN IT'S DONE, OKAY?



she confessed that she'd cried from the shock of it.



Several months after I did...



my
parents'
reaction
had never
stopped
hurting.



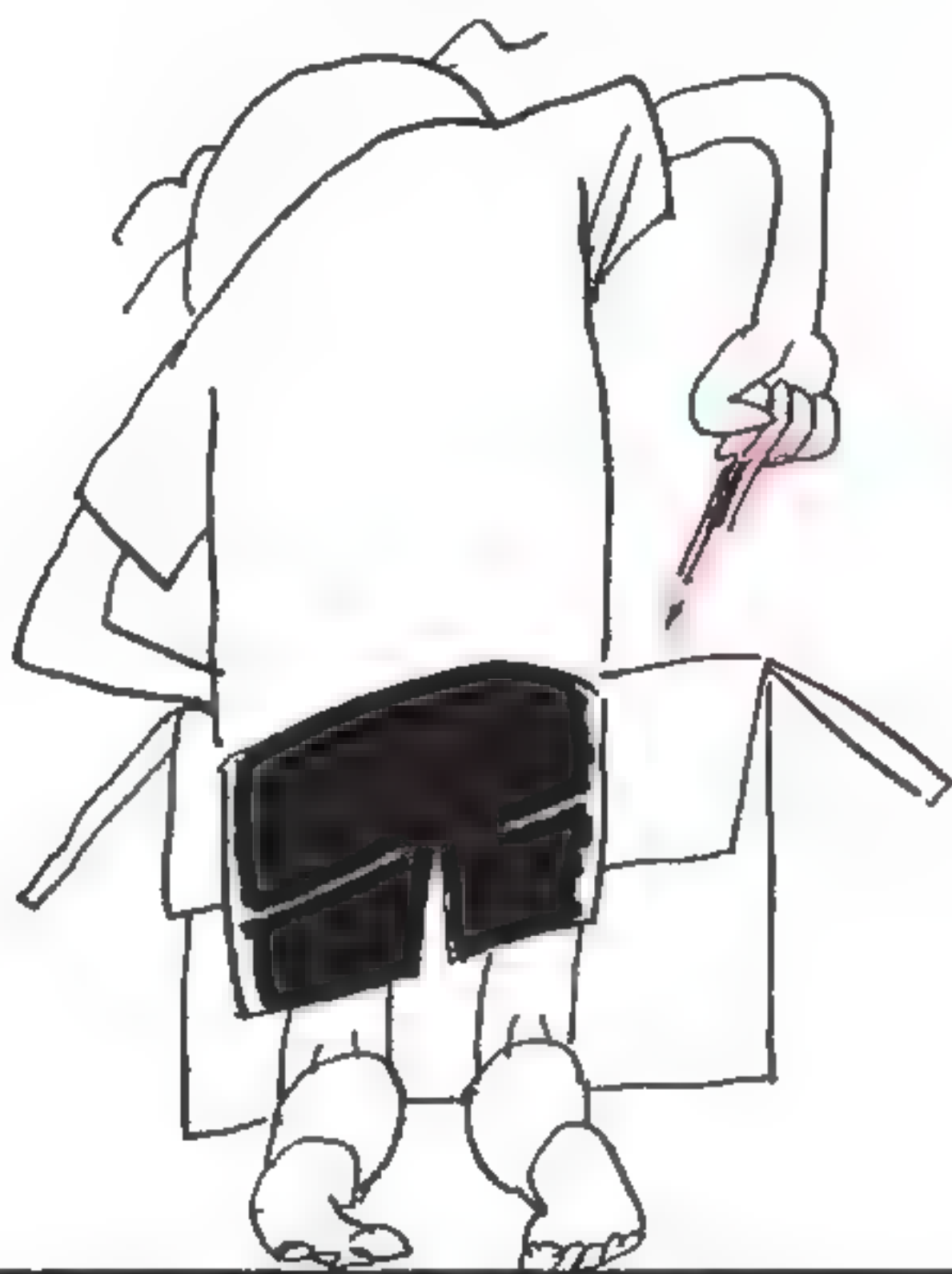
Since
the book's
reception a
few months
earlier--
no, since right
after its
publication...

I'm an
adult,
so of
course
I'm too
much for
her, but
the whole
process
was still
incredibly
hard.



I think
I was
too
much
for
Mom to
handle.

My
hand
started
bleed-
ing,
but I
couldn't
stop.

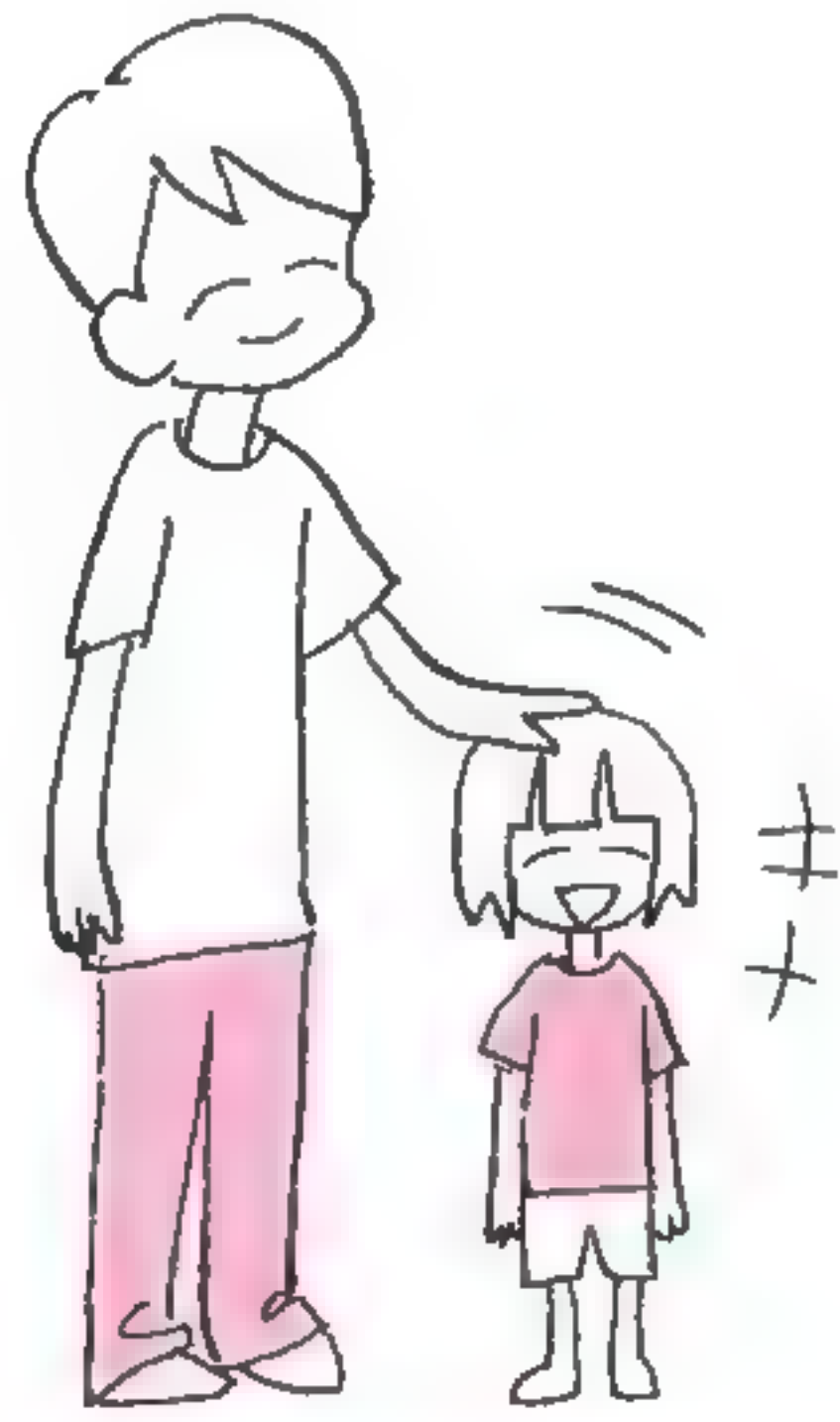


Before
I knew it,
I was
punching
my stack
of comp
copies.

I'm
sure
my mom
didn't
want this,
either.



I didn't
want to
do it.
I'm sorry,
editors.



I wanted
my mother
to love me.
I wanted to
be her good
little girl.
I wanted
her to
forgive me.

But it
was such
a perfect
symbol that
I couldn't
stop myself
from
hating it.

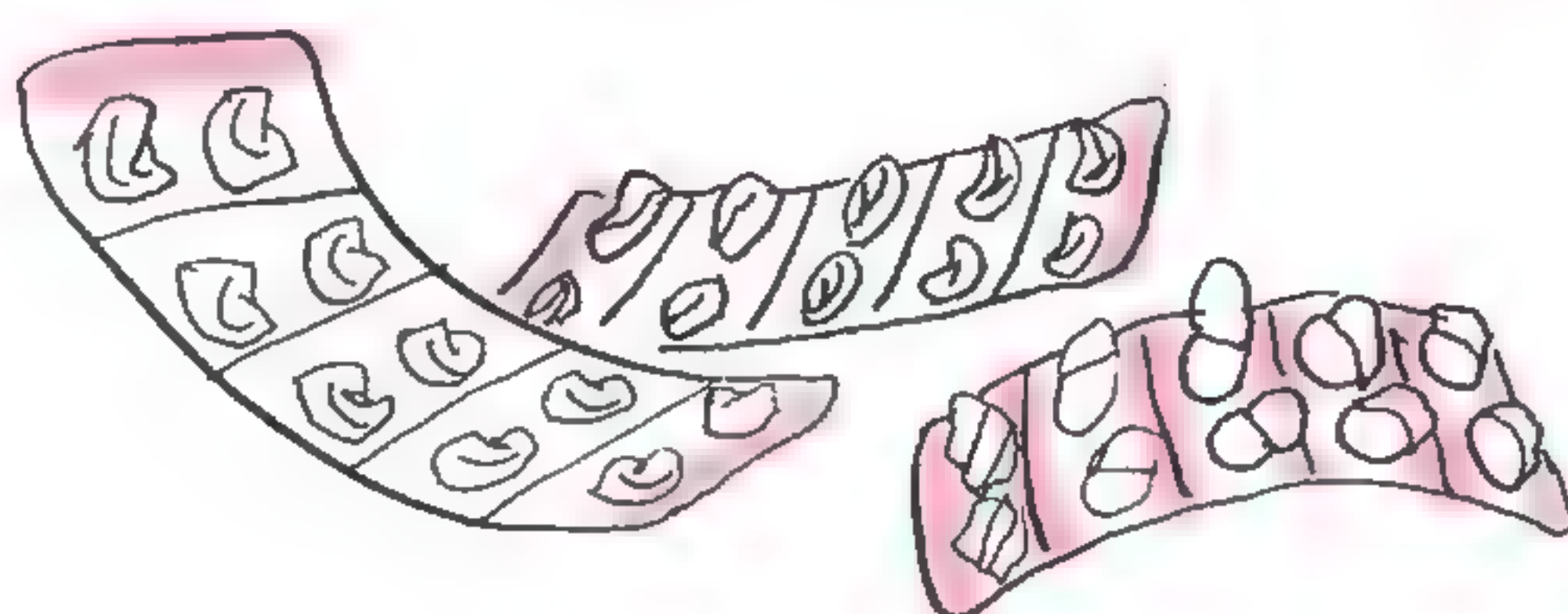


None
of that
was the
book's
fault.

I said
that
as I
punched.



"I
hate
you,
I hate
you."



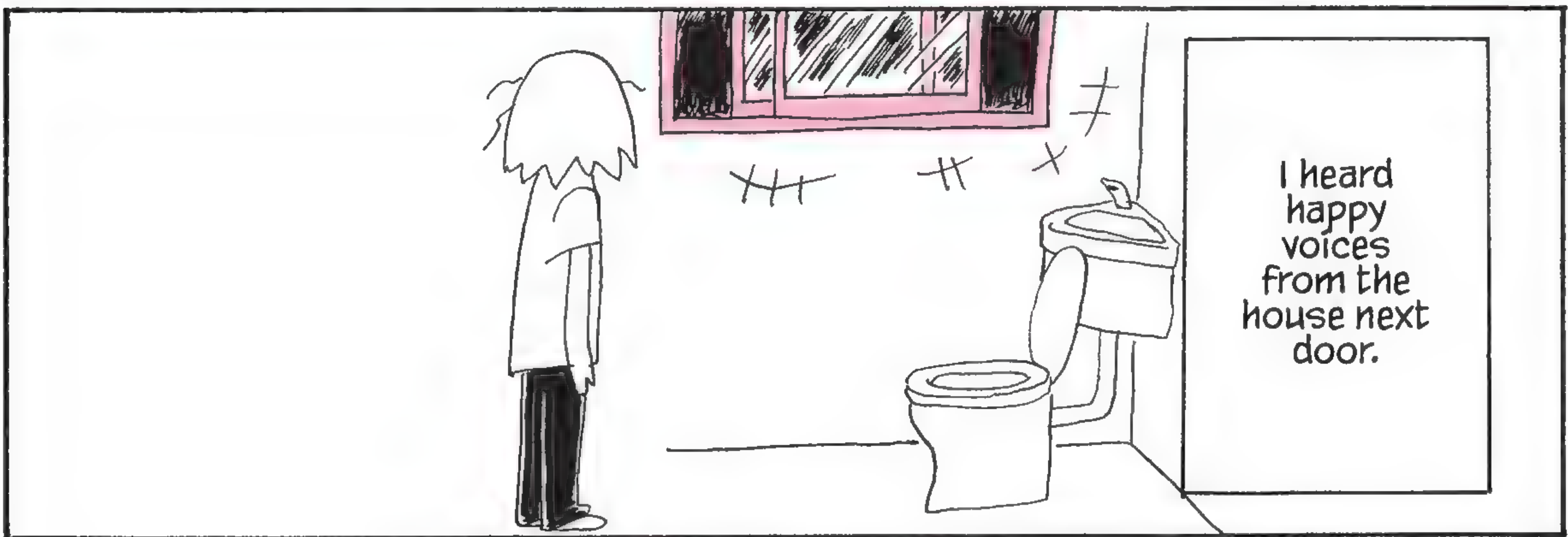
"Call an
ambulance,
and then cry
for me." It was a
contradiction,
but that was
what I thought
as I tried to
overdose and
then made
myself throw up
right away.



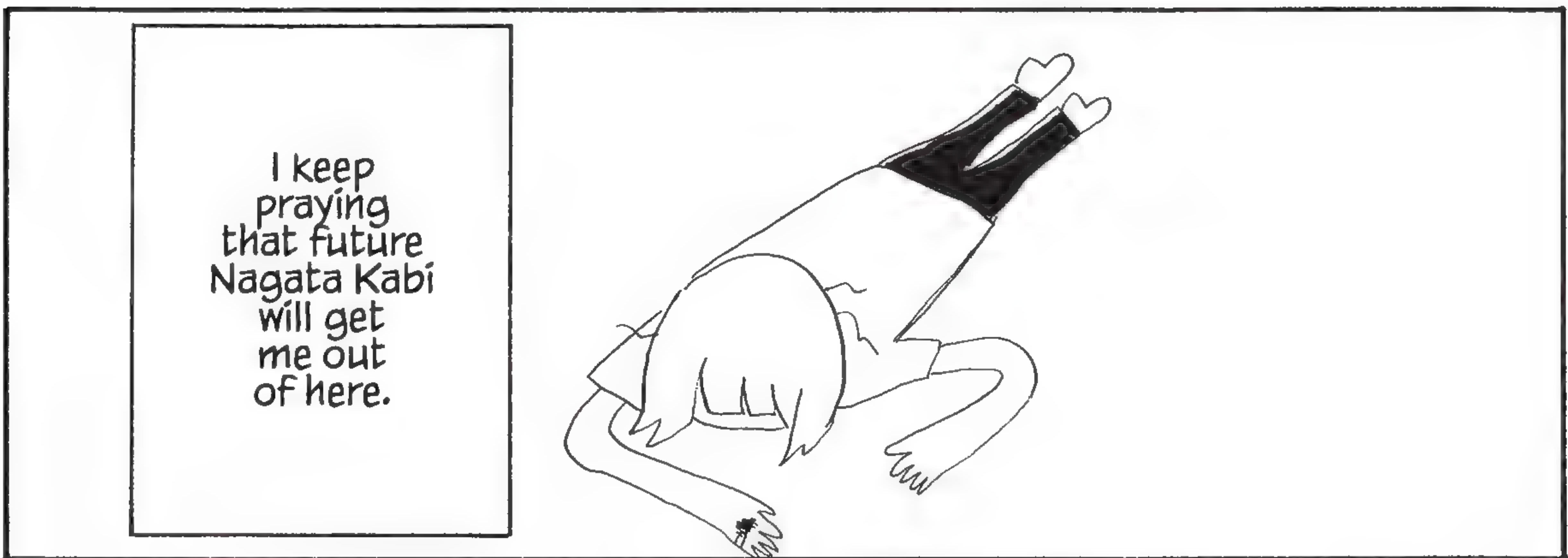
I wondered,
from the
depths of
my heart,
what I was
doing at
age thirty.



Everything
was
pointless.



I heard
happy
voices
from the
house next
door.

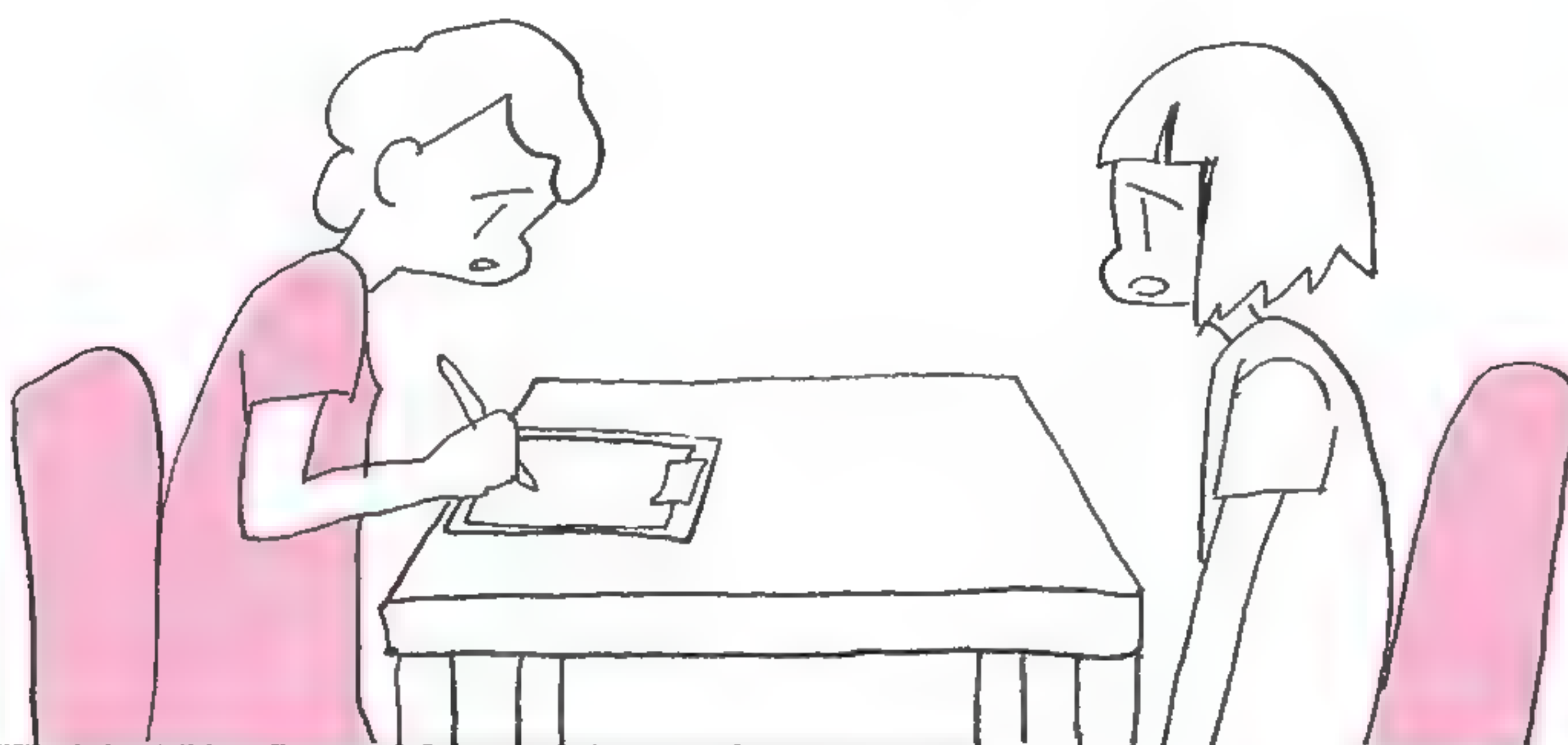


I keep
praying
that future
Nagata Kabi
will get
me out
of here.

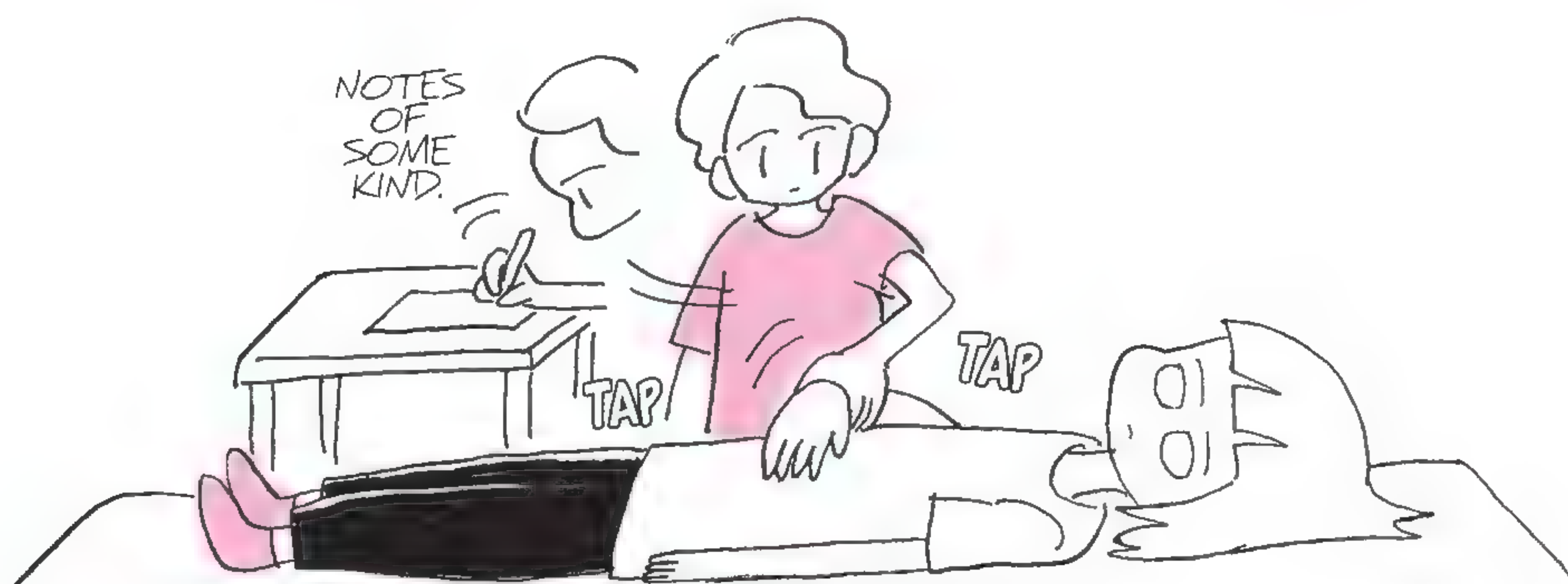


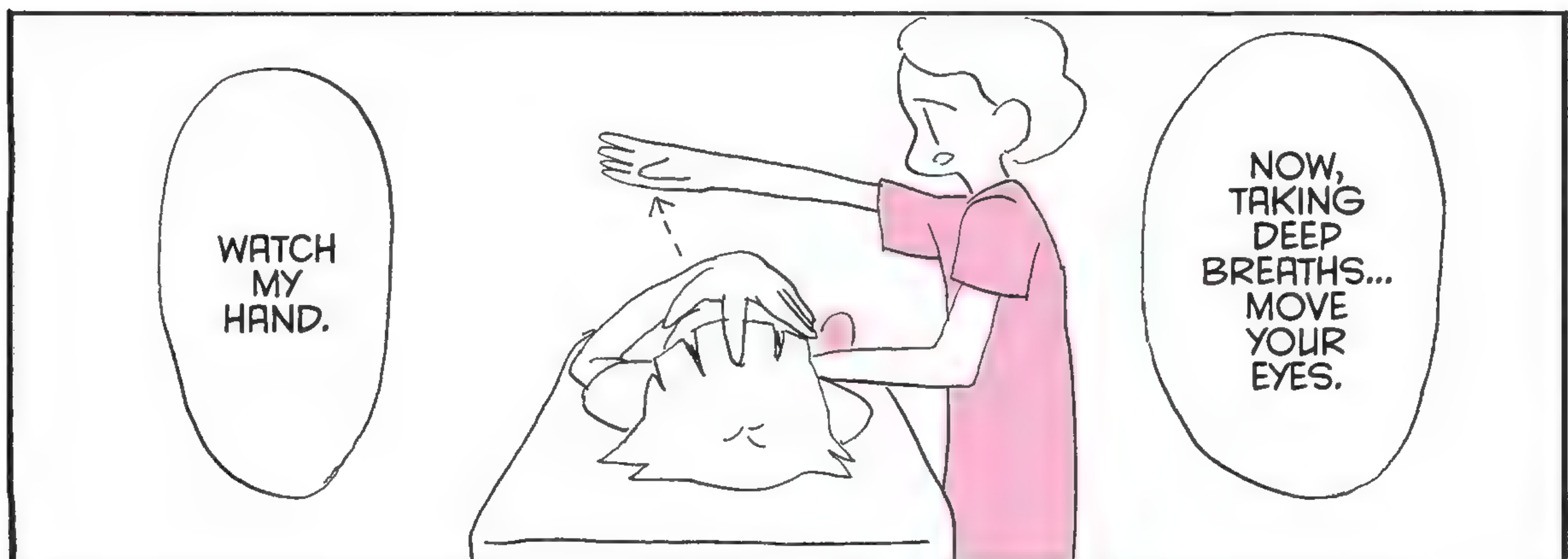
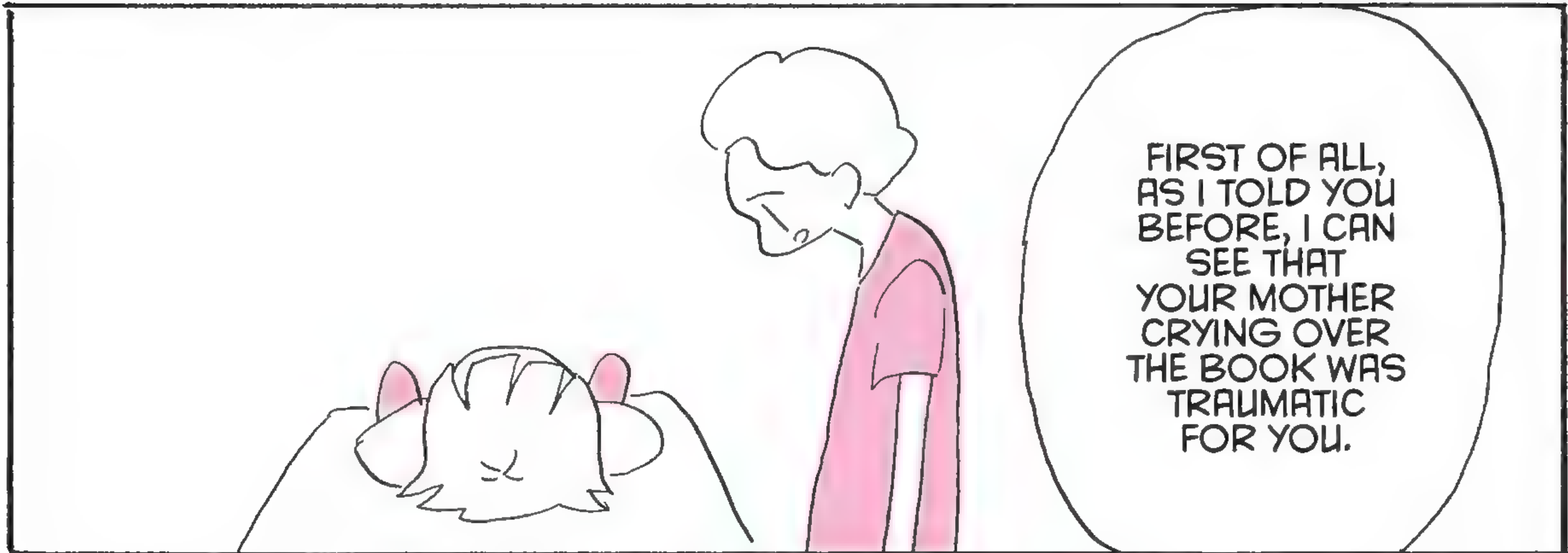
Unrelated,
I had an
appointment to
keep later--
I went to
something
called
"BodyTalk"
treatment.

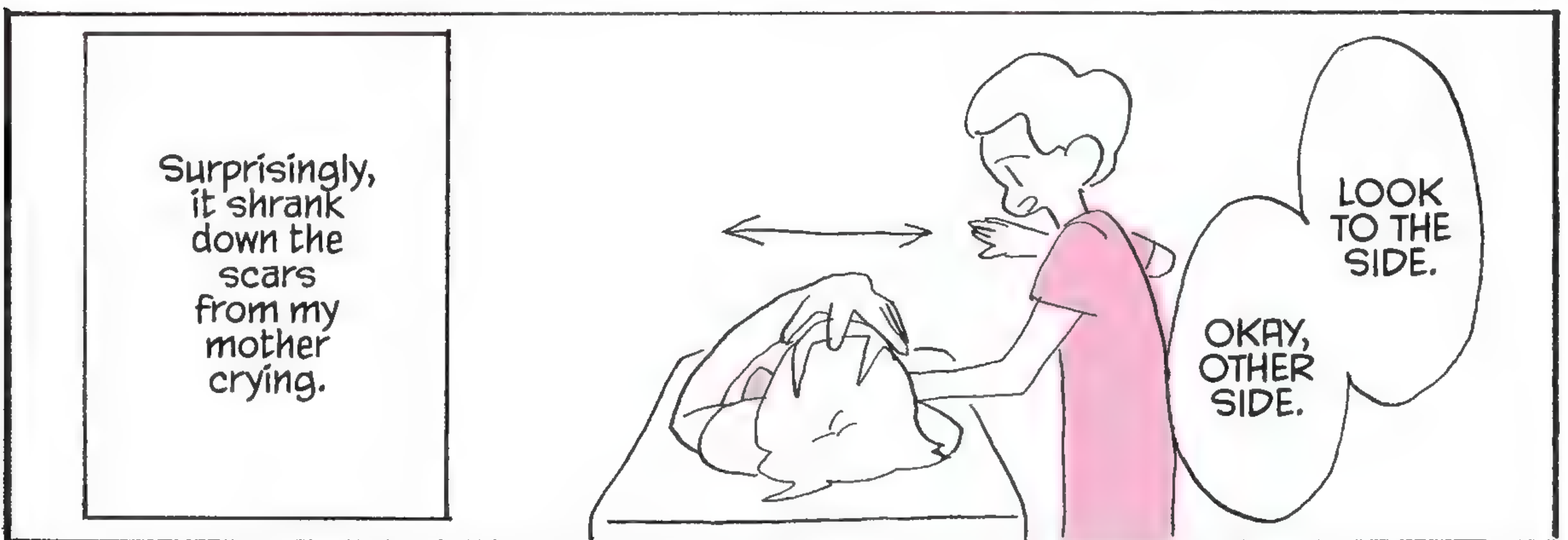
They
supposedly
tap your head
and body to
improve your
natural healing
power, and to find
spots where the
body and mind are
in bad shape.

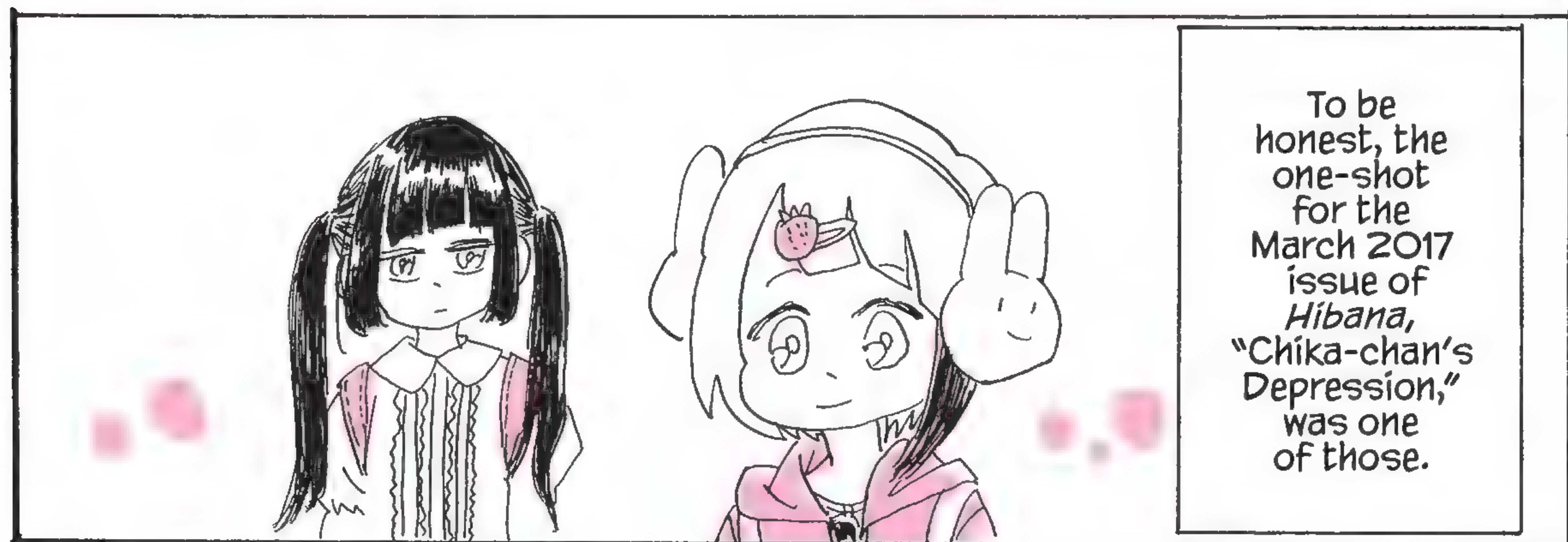
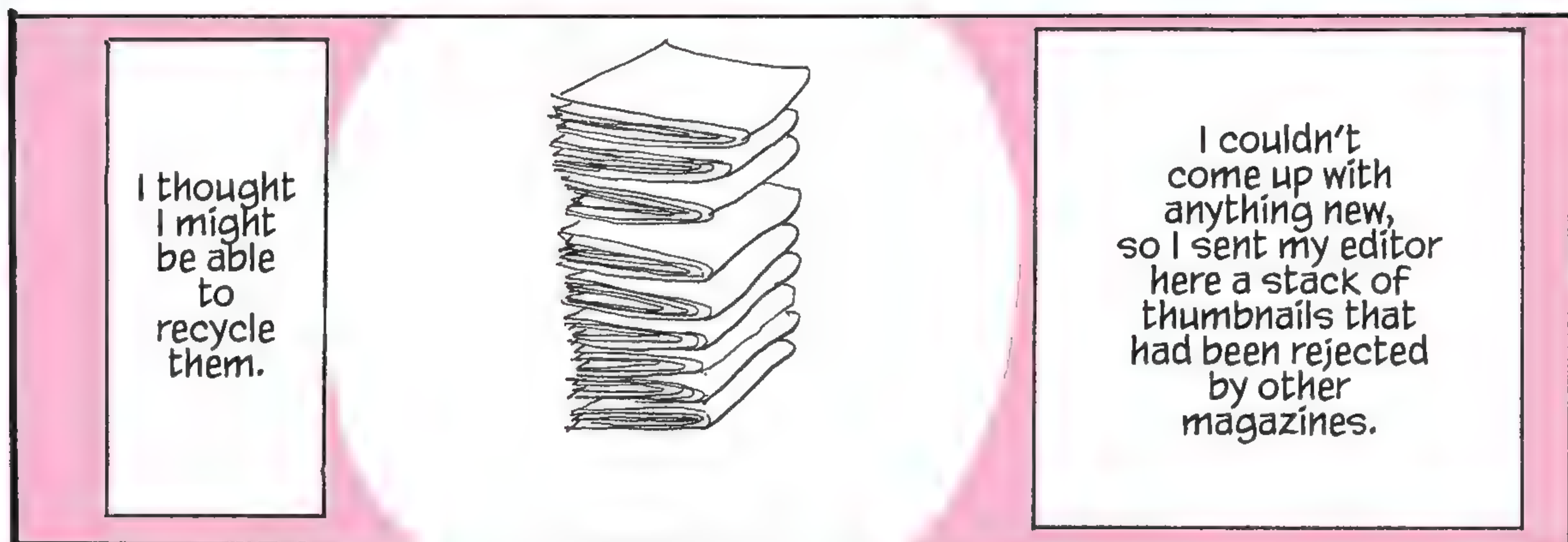
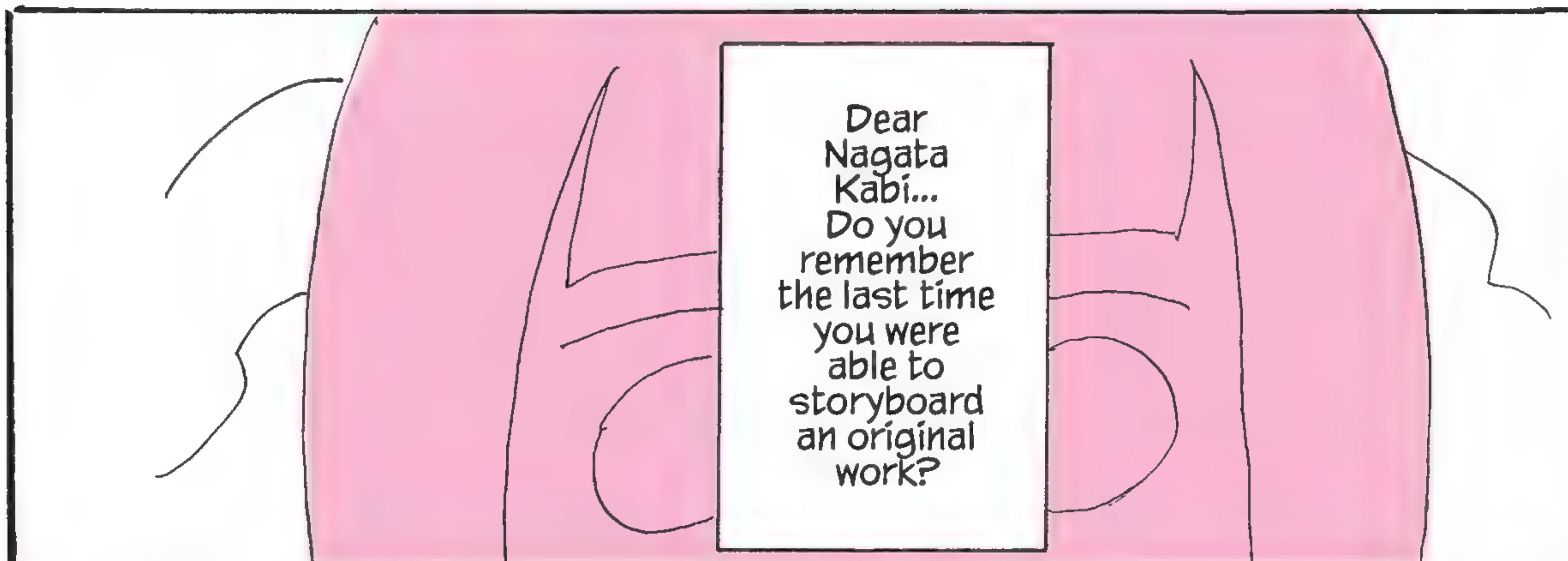


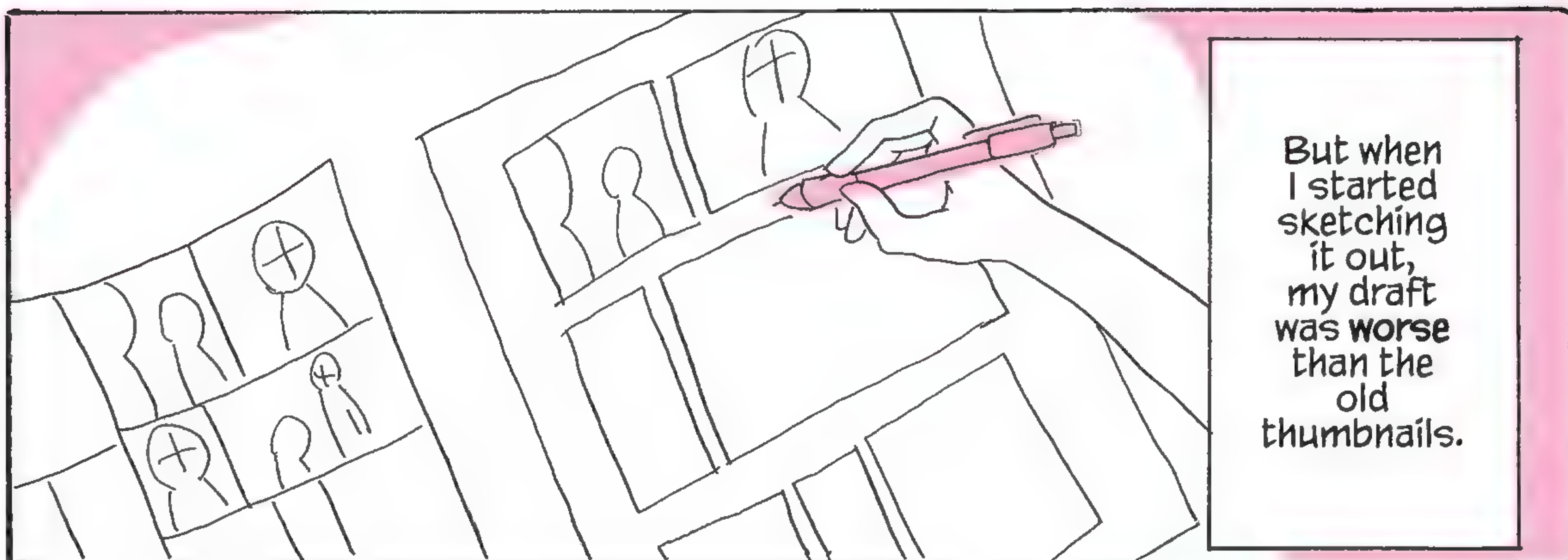
Before
starting,
we talked
and filled
out a
question-
naire.











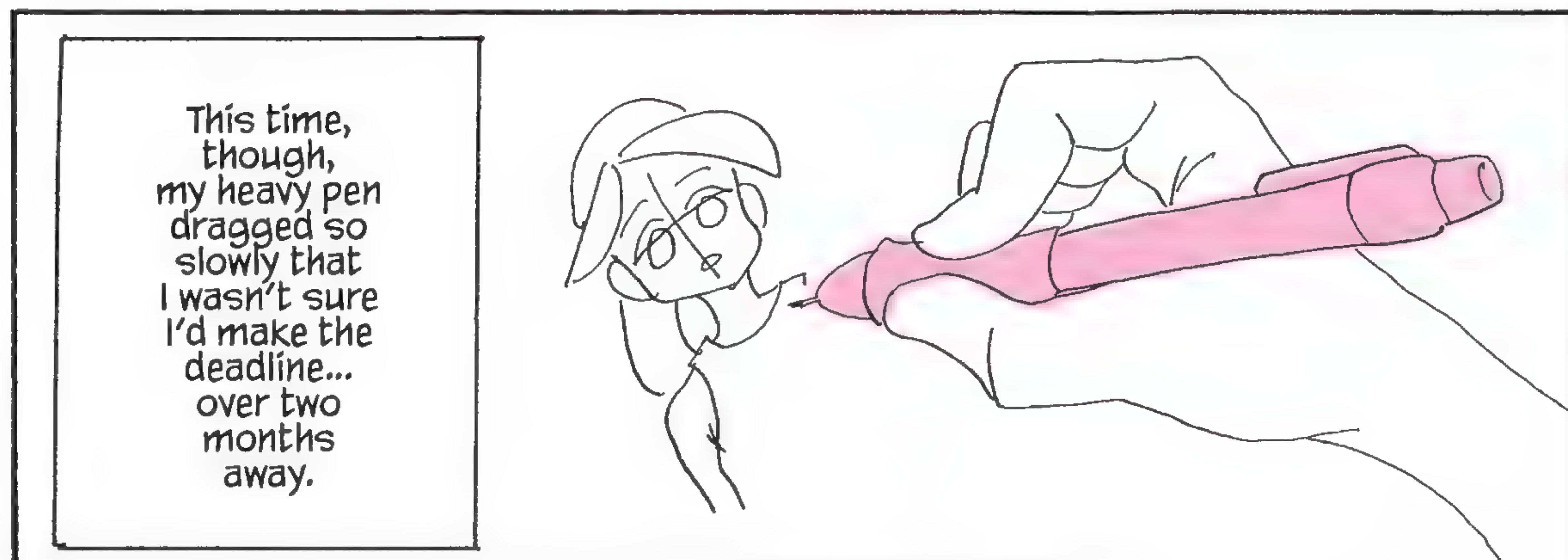
But when I started sketching it out, my draft was worse than the old thumbnails.



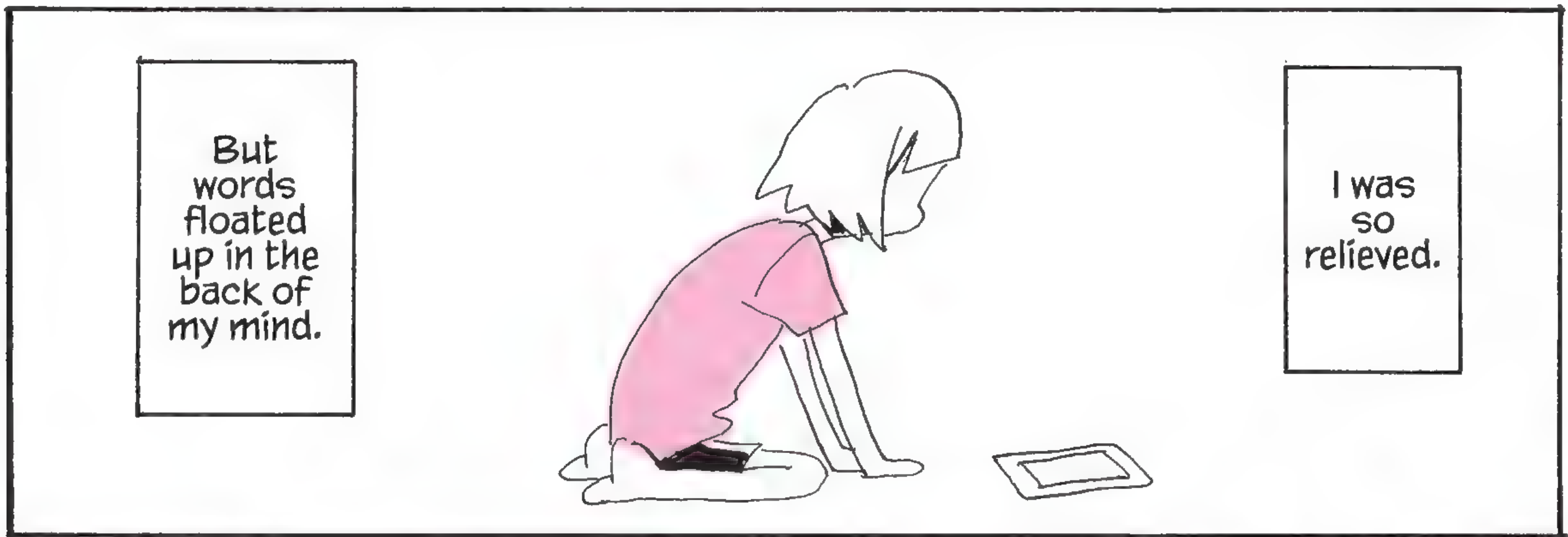
It wasn't what I wanted to say *now*, so I struggled to produce it.

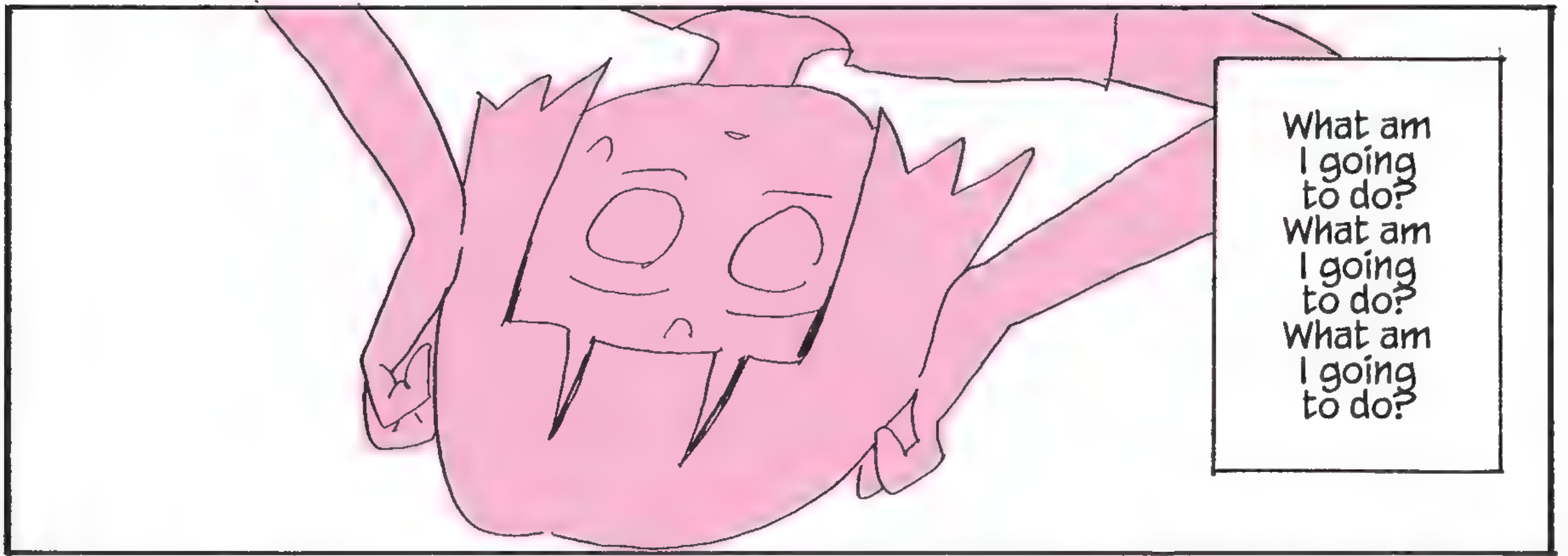


I had trouble like that with "Chika-chan," but I managed to finish that one.

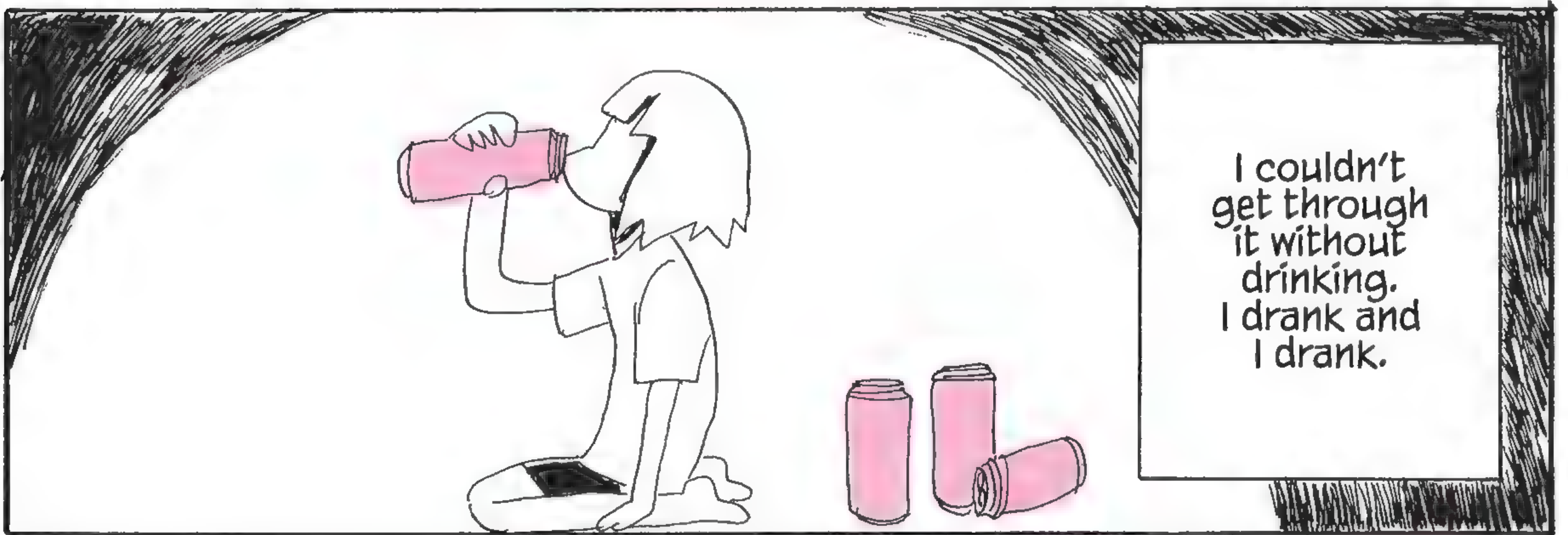


This time, though, my heavy pen dragged so slowly that I wasn't sure I'd make the deadline... over two months away.





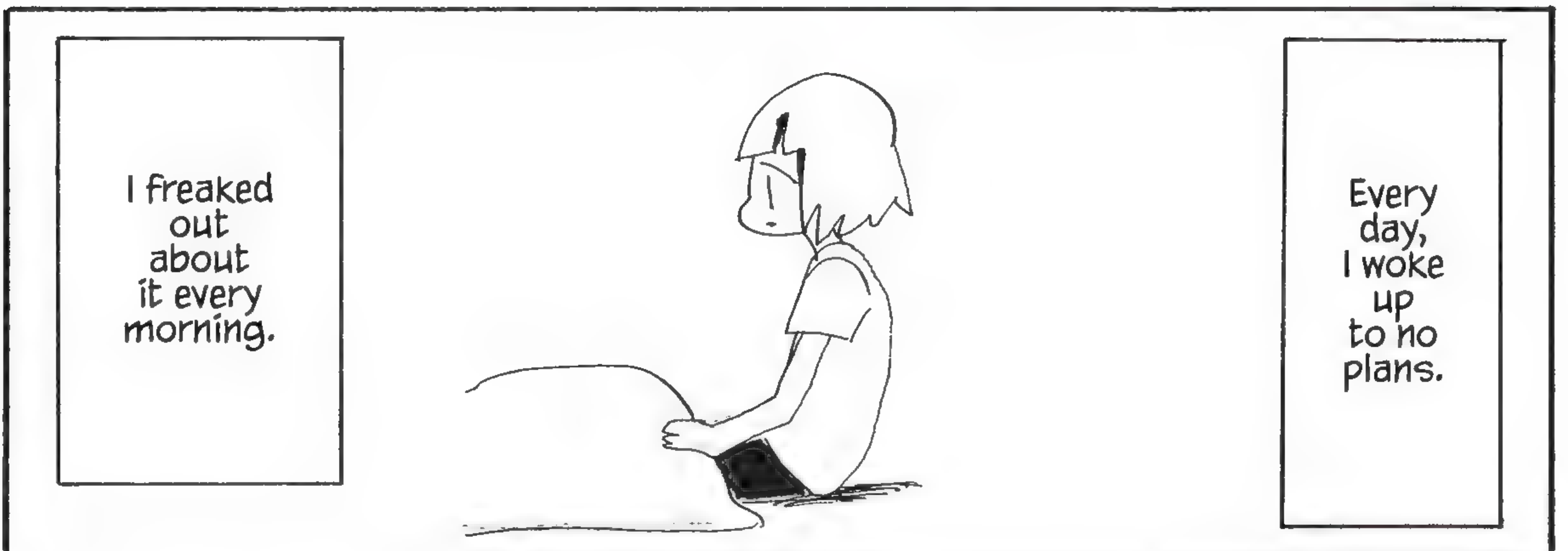
What am
I going
to do?
What am
I going
to do?
What am
I going
to do?



I couldn't
get through
it without
drinking.
I drank and
I drank.



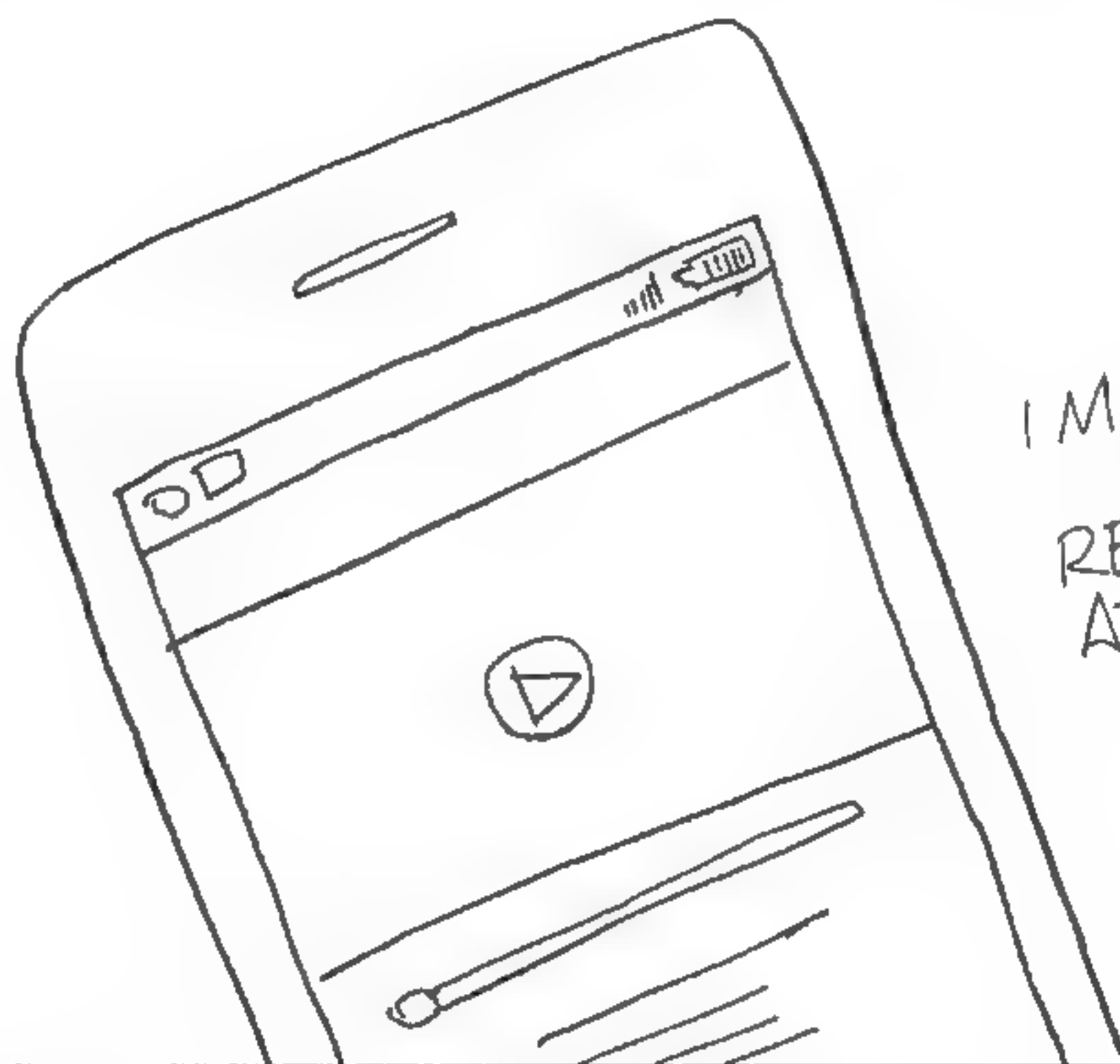
Drinking
softened
the
edges of
reality
for me.



I freaked
out
about
it every
morning.

Every
day,
I woke
up
to no
plans.

I didn't
watch
a
single
movie.



I MANAGED
TO
REGISTER,
AT LEAST.

I didn't
even
have the
energy
to type.

I couldn't
do
anything
anymore.



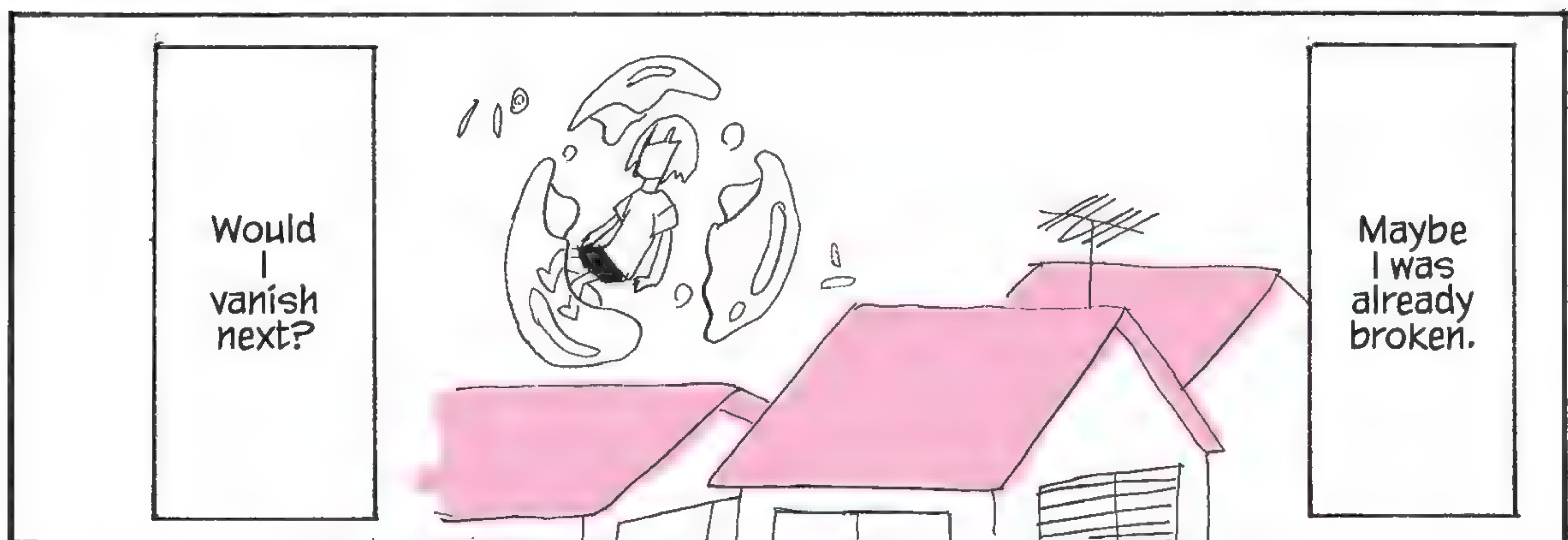
MY
ART...
USED
TO BE
BETTER...

THE
LITTLE
BUBBLES
FLY~!
♪

THEY
REACH THE
ROOF THEY
BREAK, AND
THEN THEY
DISAPPEAR~!
♪

TRASH
COLLECTION

FLY
UP TO
THE
ROOF~!
♪



I just
kept
waking
up.



I couldn't
really sleep,
even when
I took
sleeping
pills.



My usual
system of
taking walks
to help me
come up with
ideas...
Even *that*
became too
scary.
I couldn't
go.

One time,
when I drank
too much and
went to sleep
without a
blanket, I
peed the bed.
My whole body
was soaked.

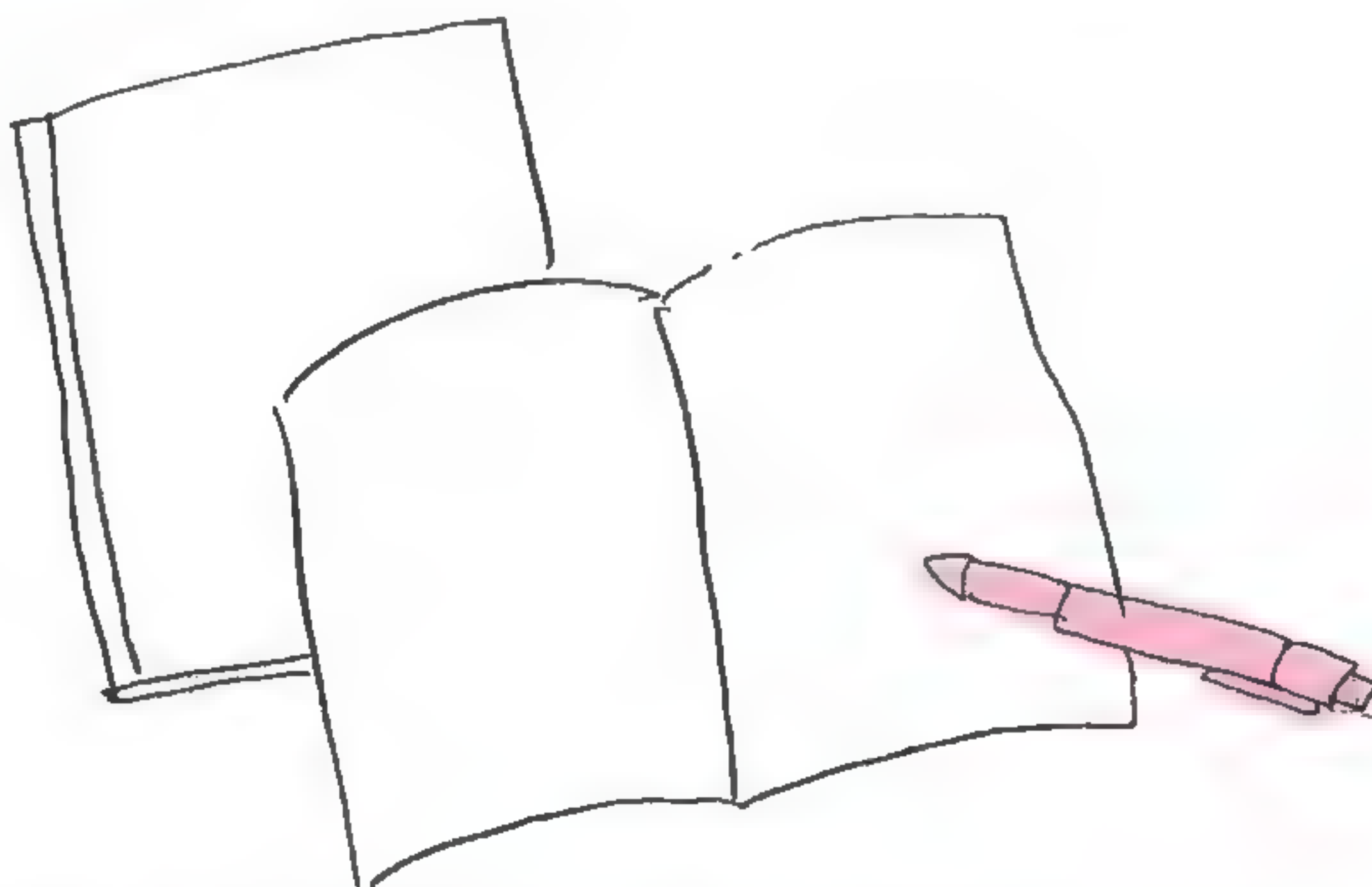


I was
slowly
going
nowhere.

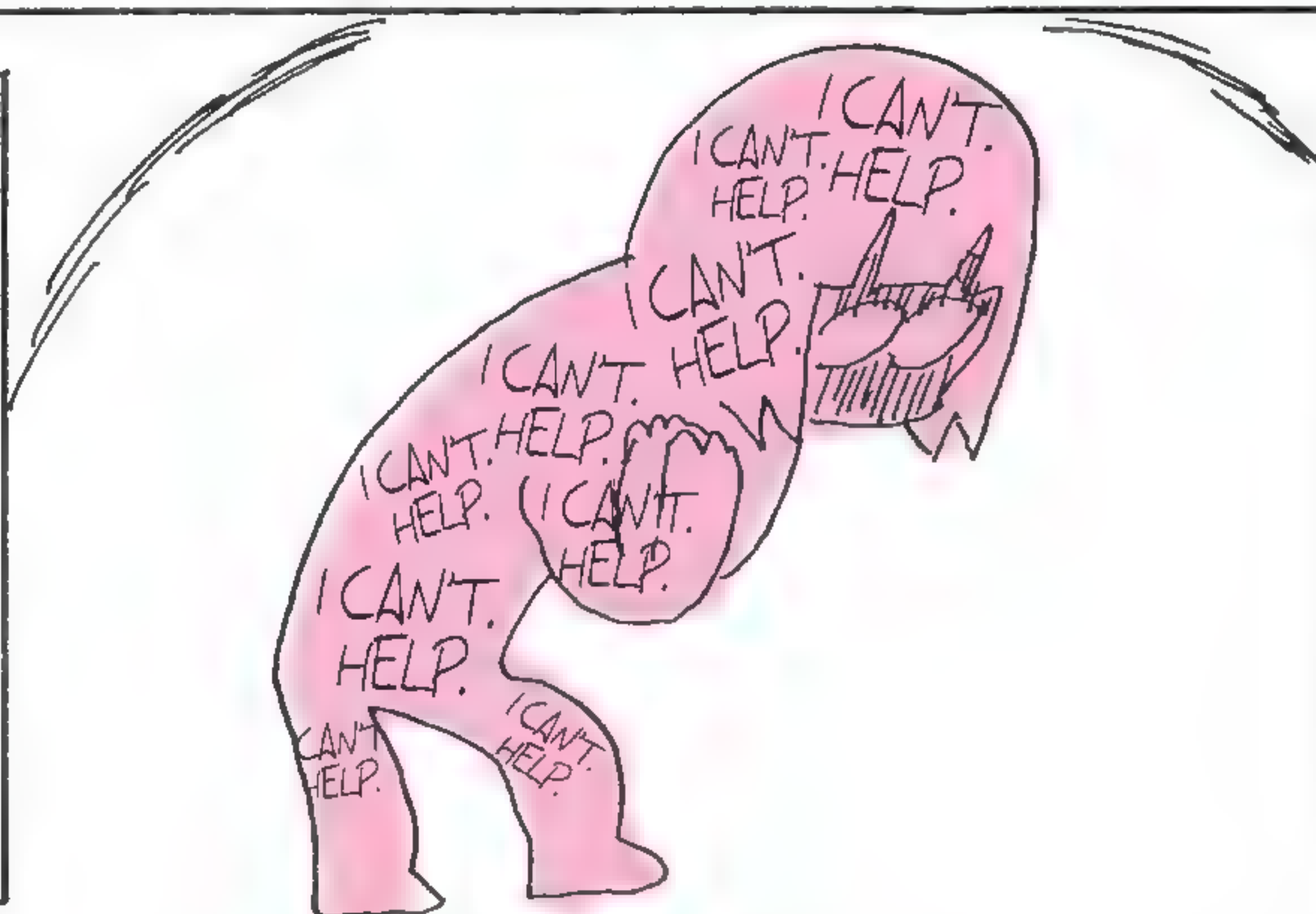


I made a bunch of appointments for counseling and therapy.

I even tried a method for coming up with ideas that I saw on Twitter.

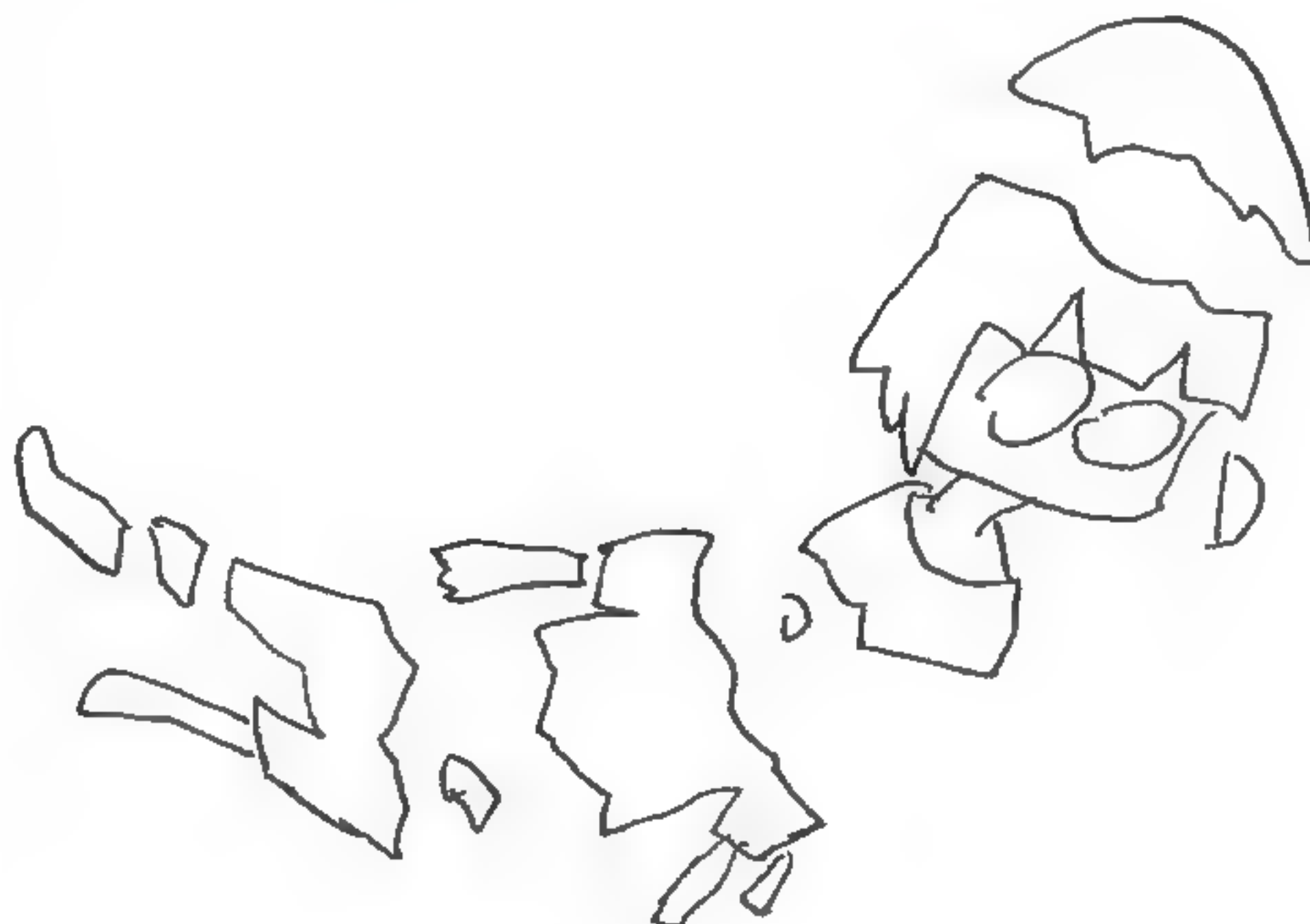


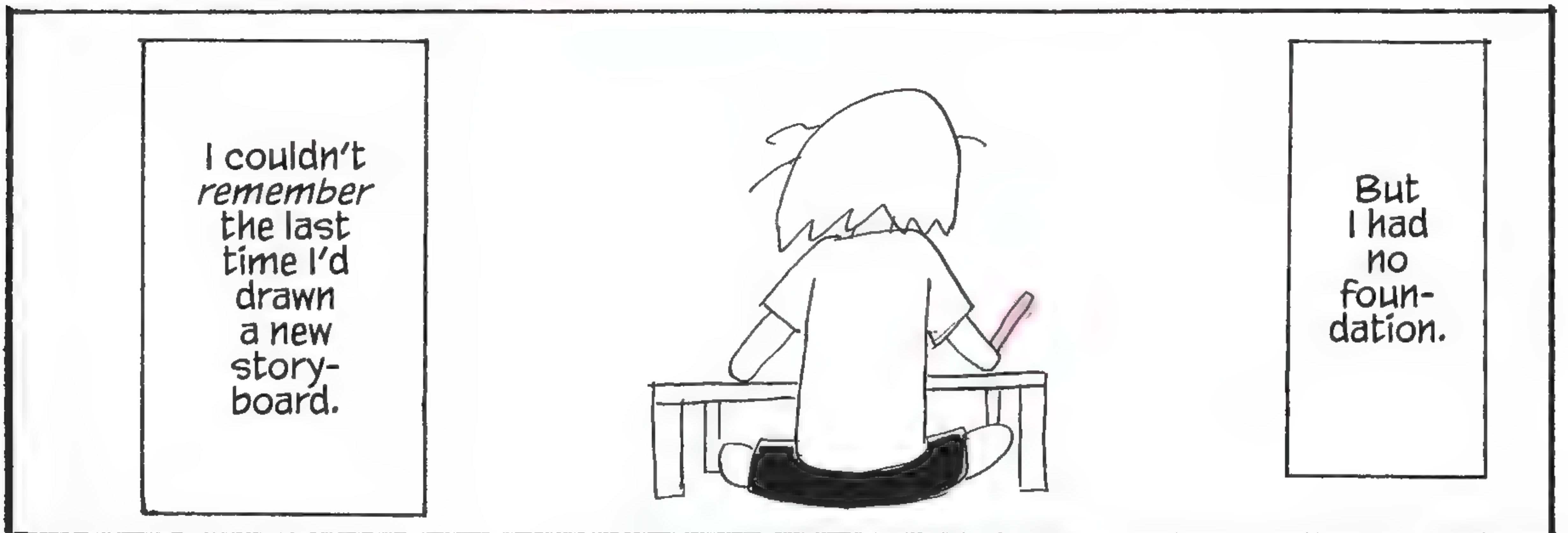
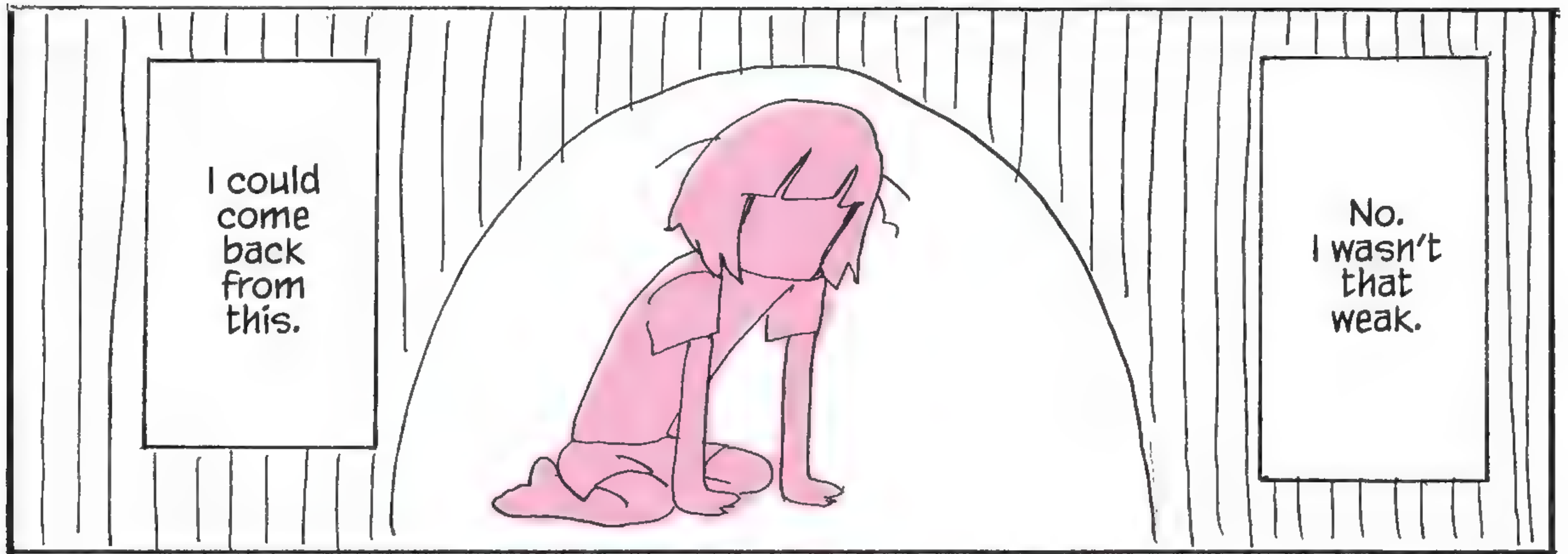
"Today is the hardest day of my life" was my update, over and over. For many days.

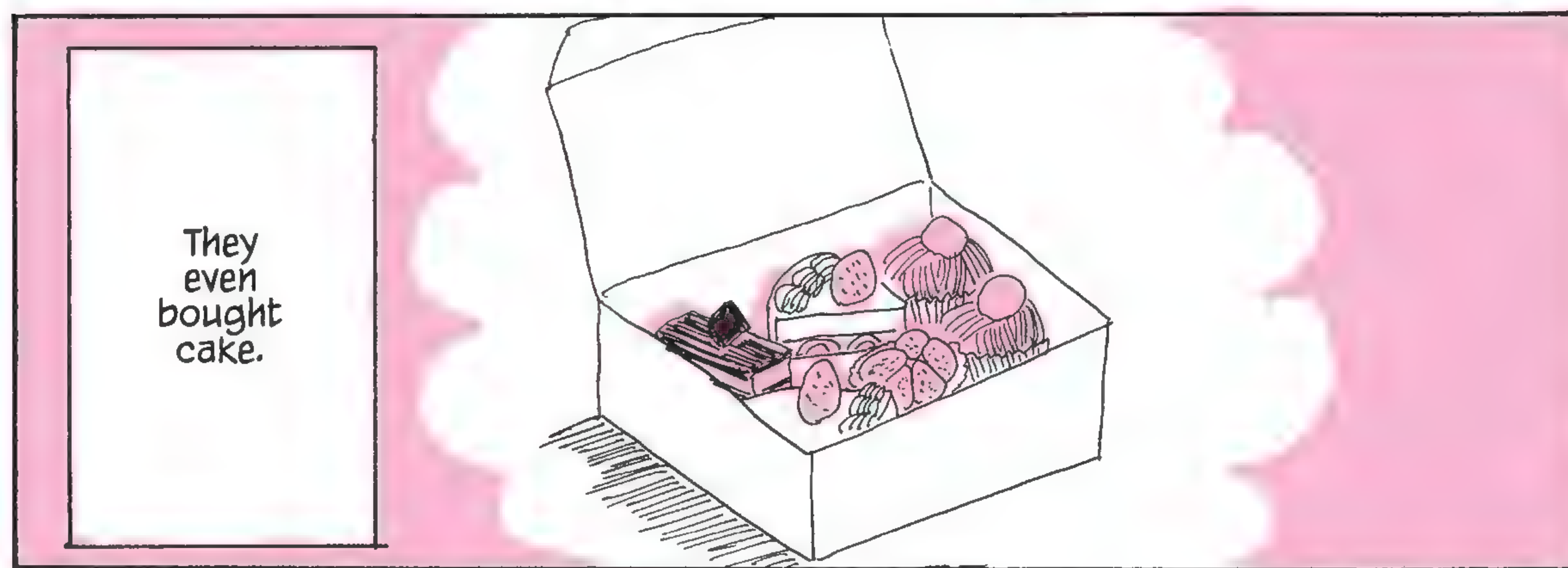
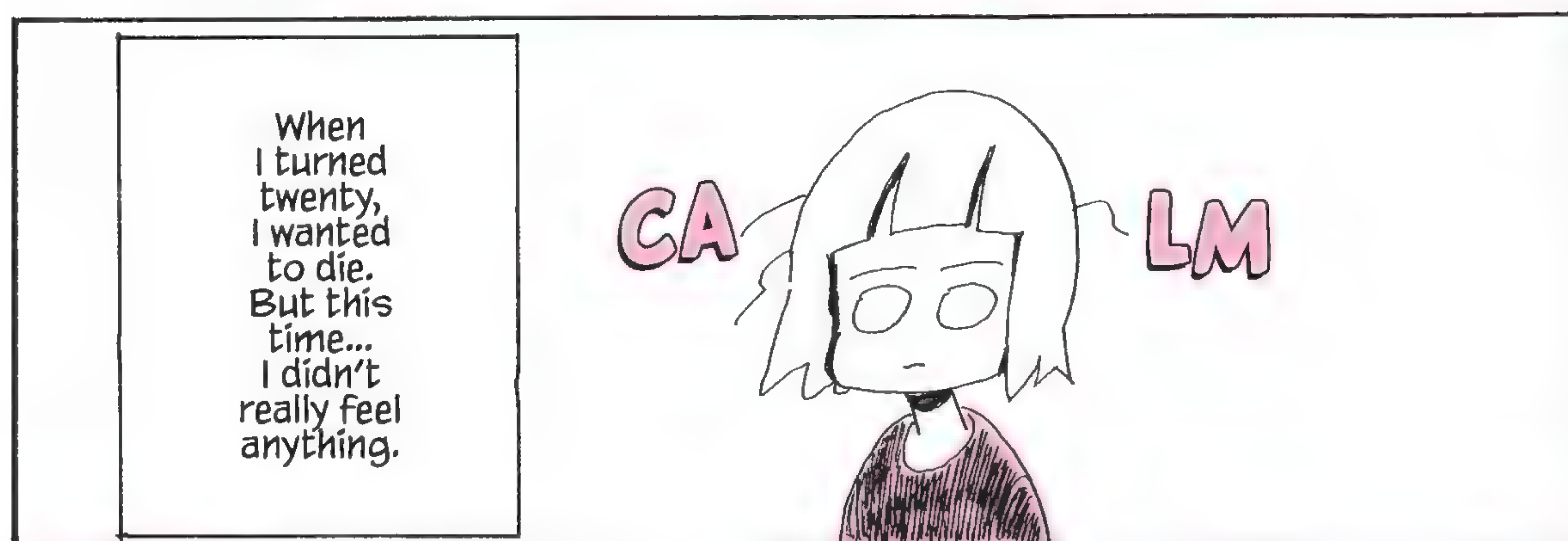
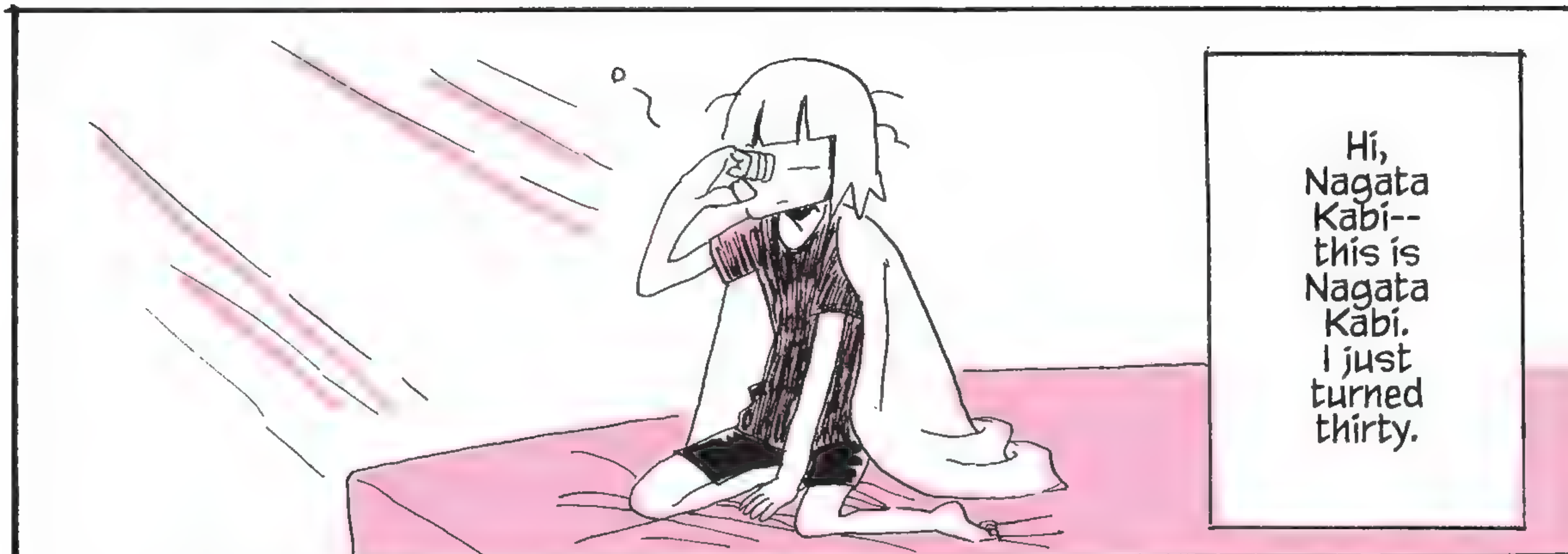


My body was filled with *I can't* and *help*.

Was I really going to break and disappear?

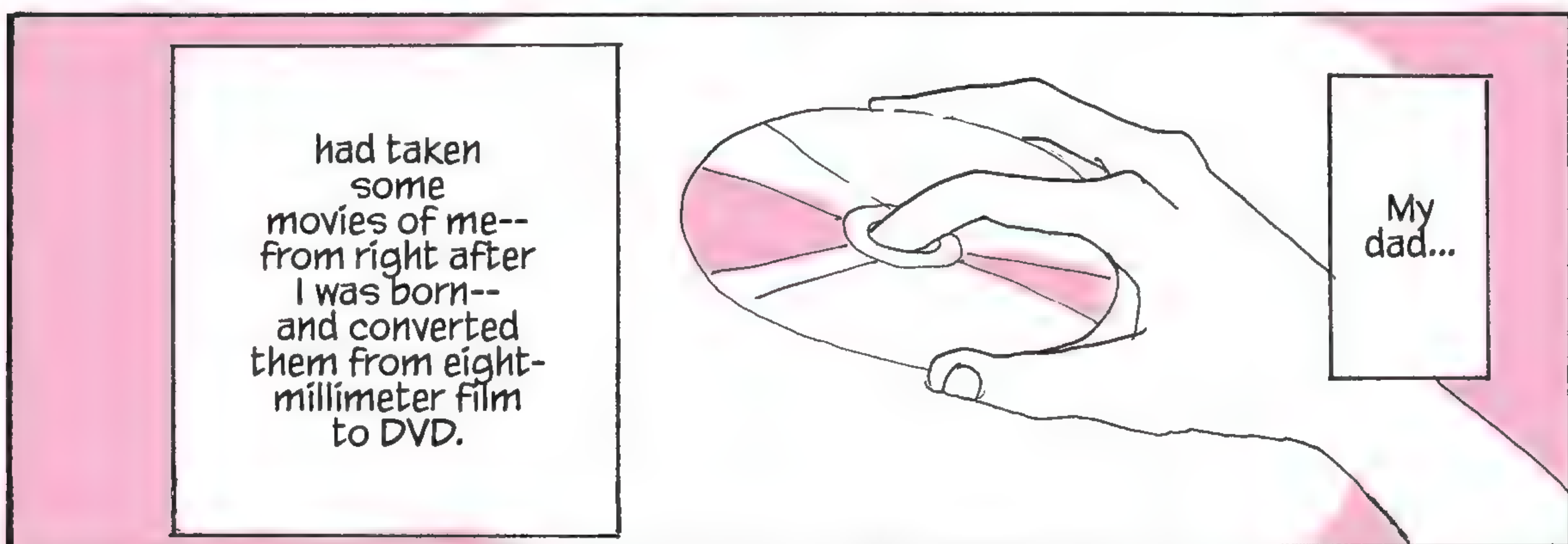






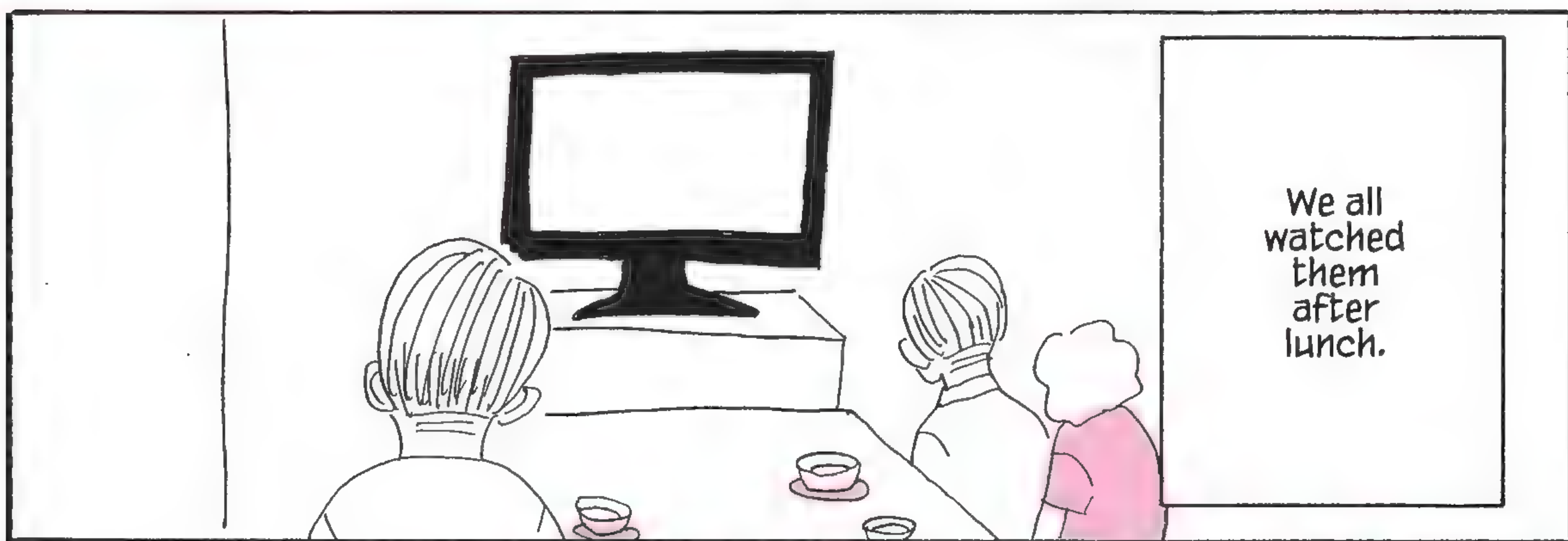


It turned
into a
pretty
decadent
birthday.



had taken
some
movies of me--
from right after
I was born--
and converted
them from eight-
millimeter film
to DVD.

My
dad...

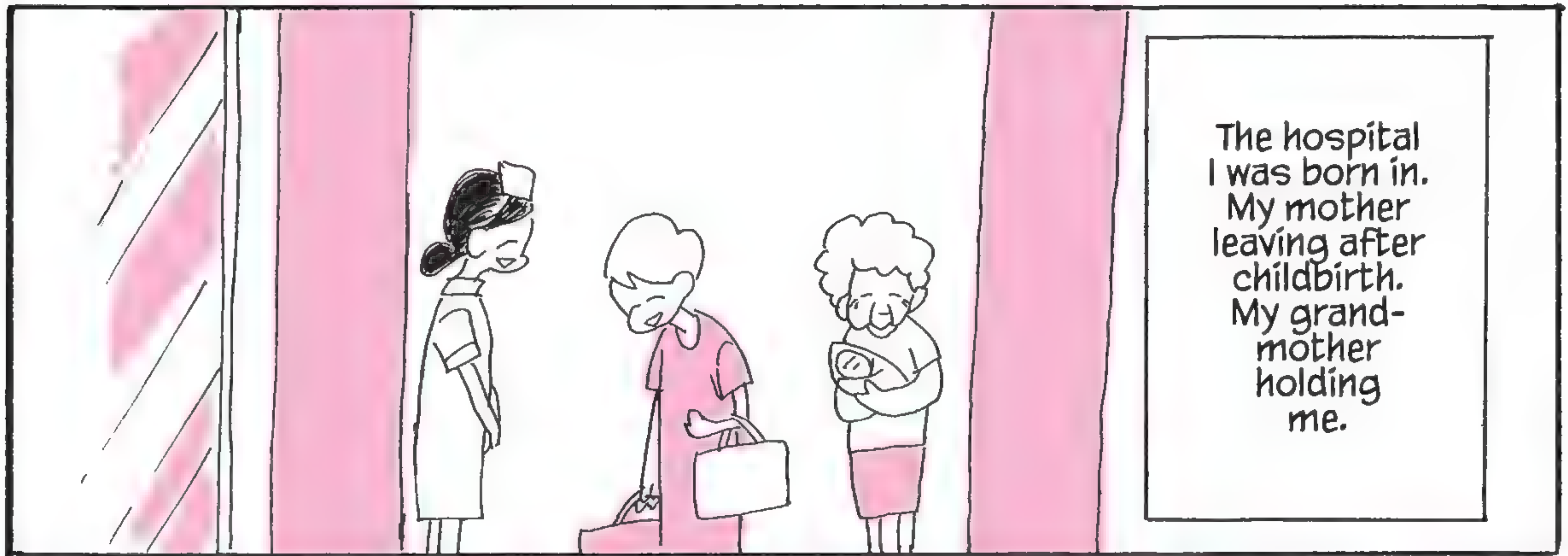


We all
watched
them
after
lunch.

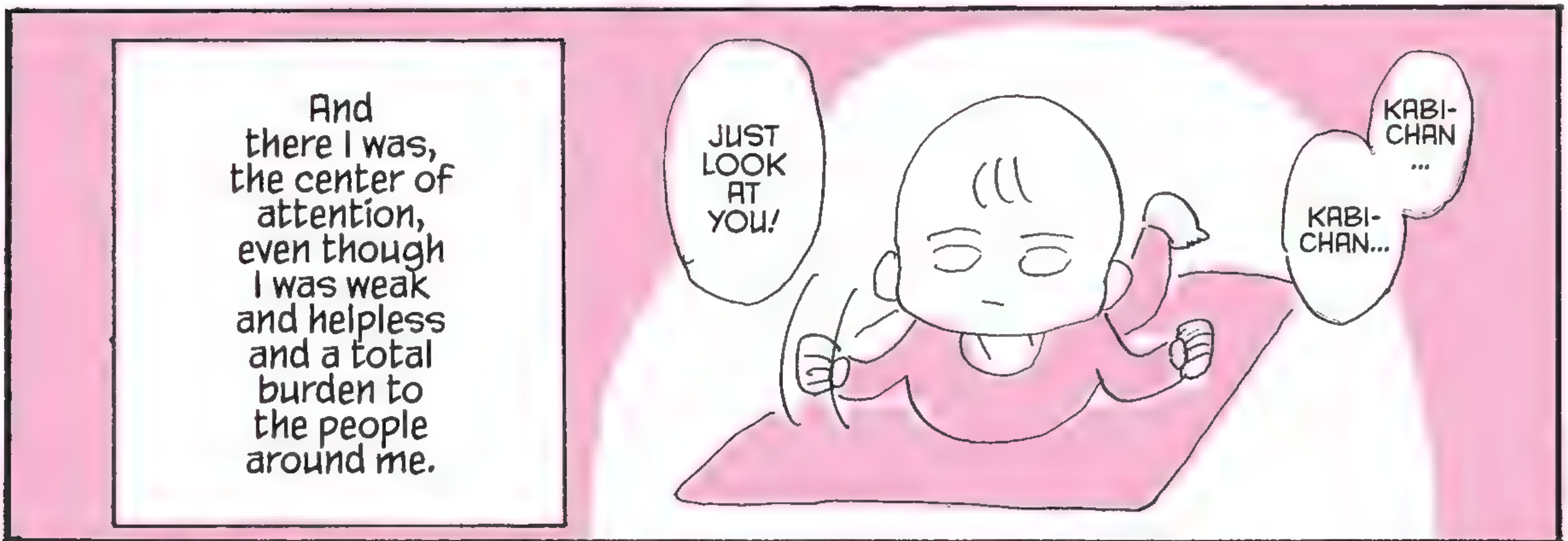


The day
turned
into a
festive
party for
me.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



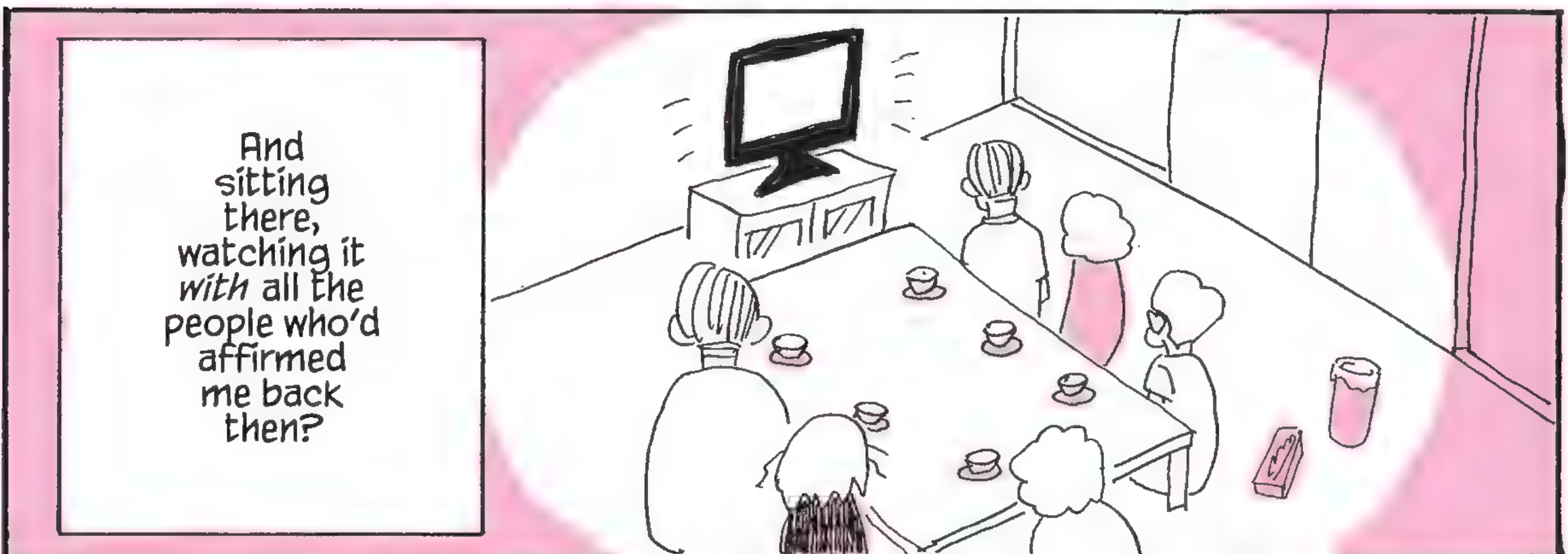
The hospital
I was born in.
My mother
leaving after
childbirth.
My grand-
mother
holding
me.



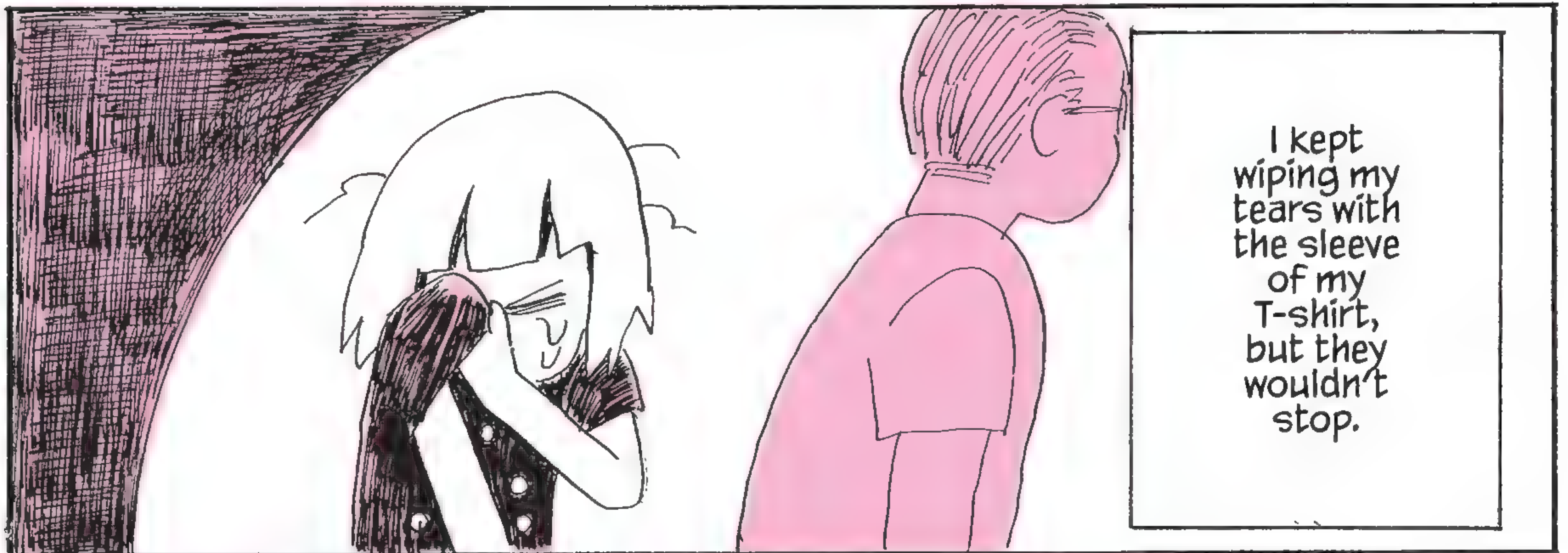
And
there I was,
the center of
attention,
even though
I was weak
and helpless
and a total
burden to
the people
around me.



What
was this
mysterious,
absolute
acceptance
about?



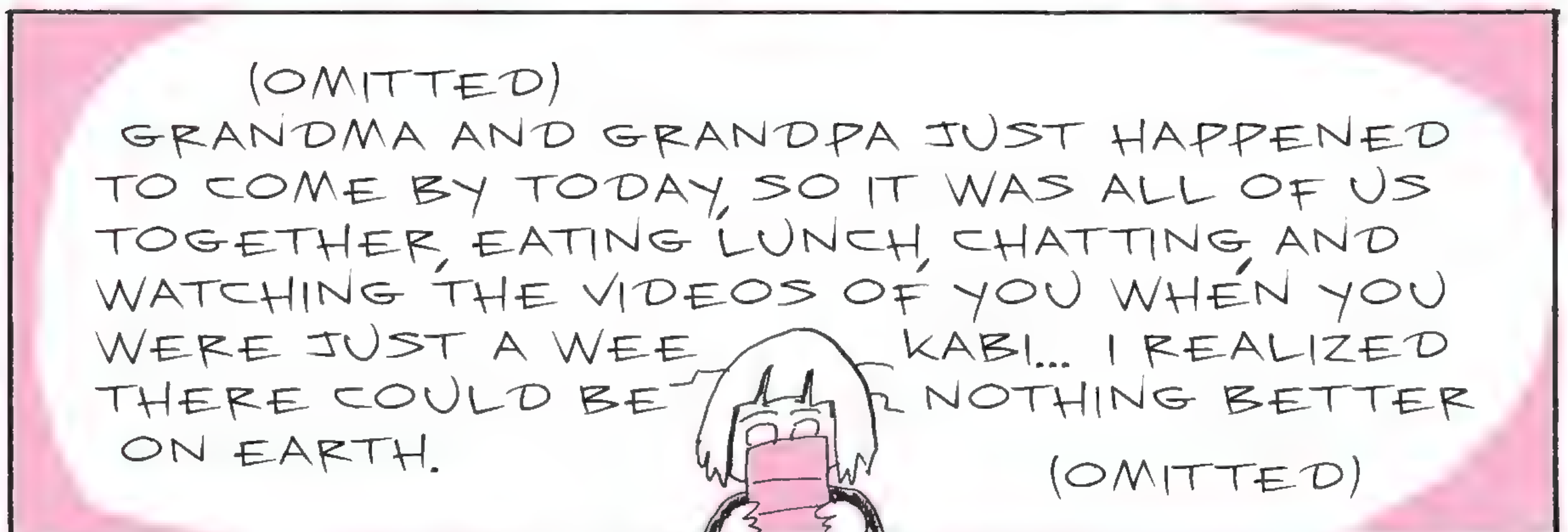
And
sitting
there,
watching it
with all the
people who'd
affirmed
me back
then?



I kept
wiping my
tears with
the sleeve
of my
T-shirt,
but they
wouldn't
stop.

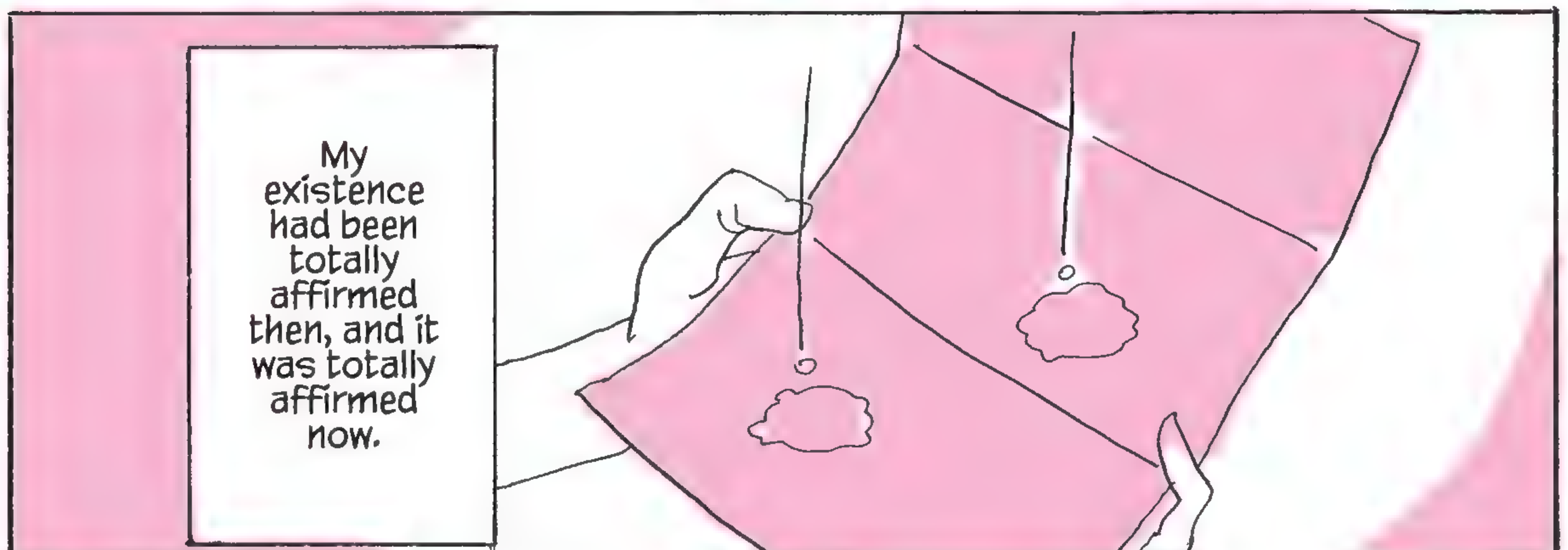


Later,
in the
evening,
my mom
gave me
a letter.

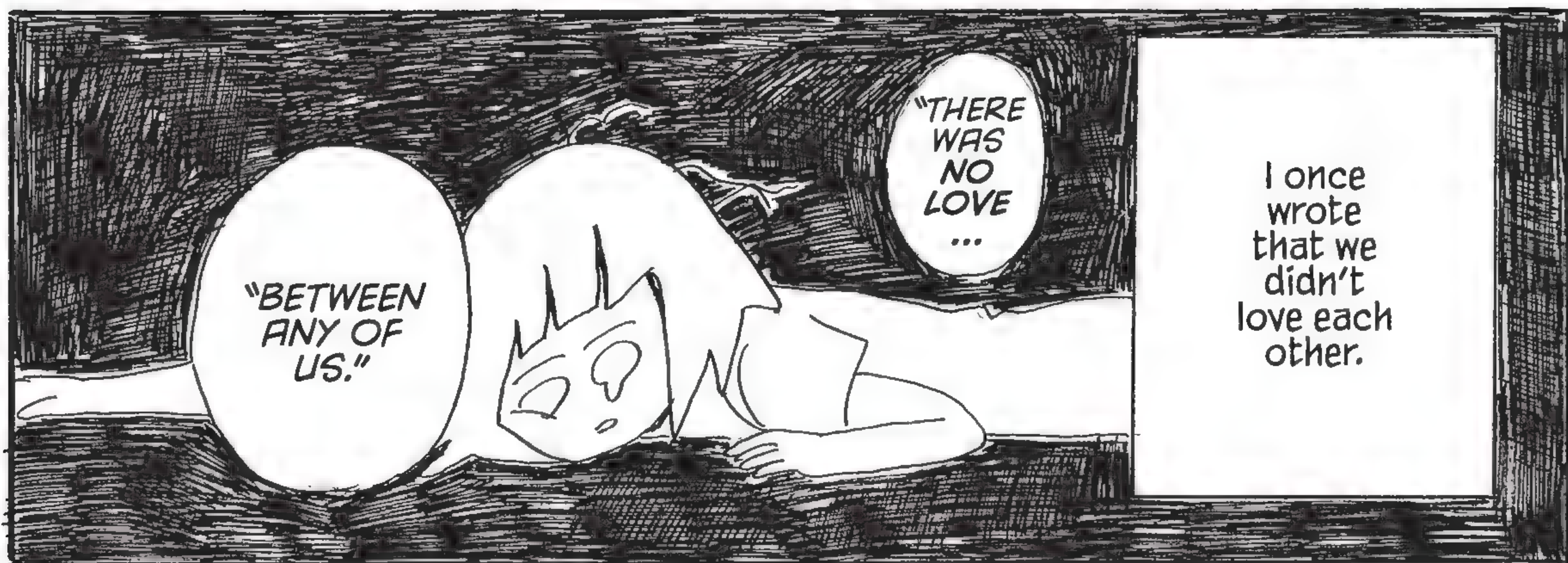


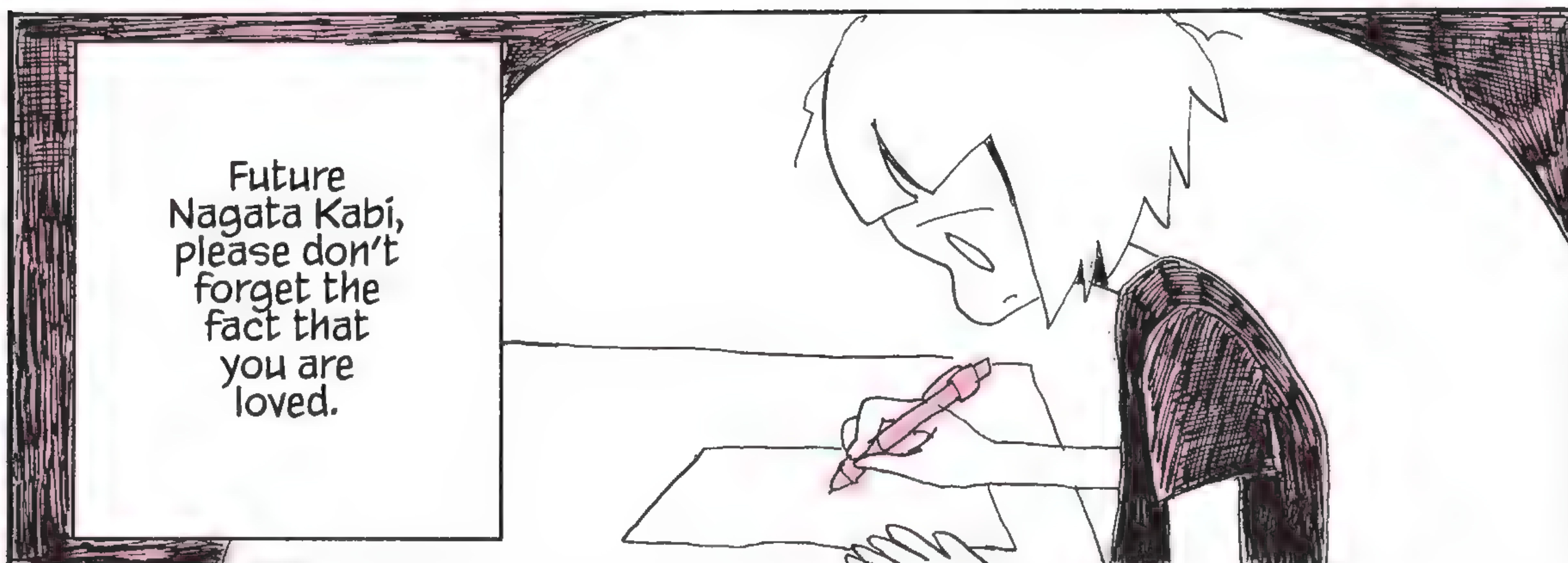
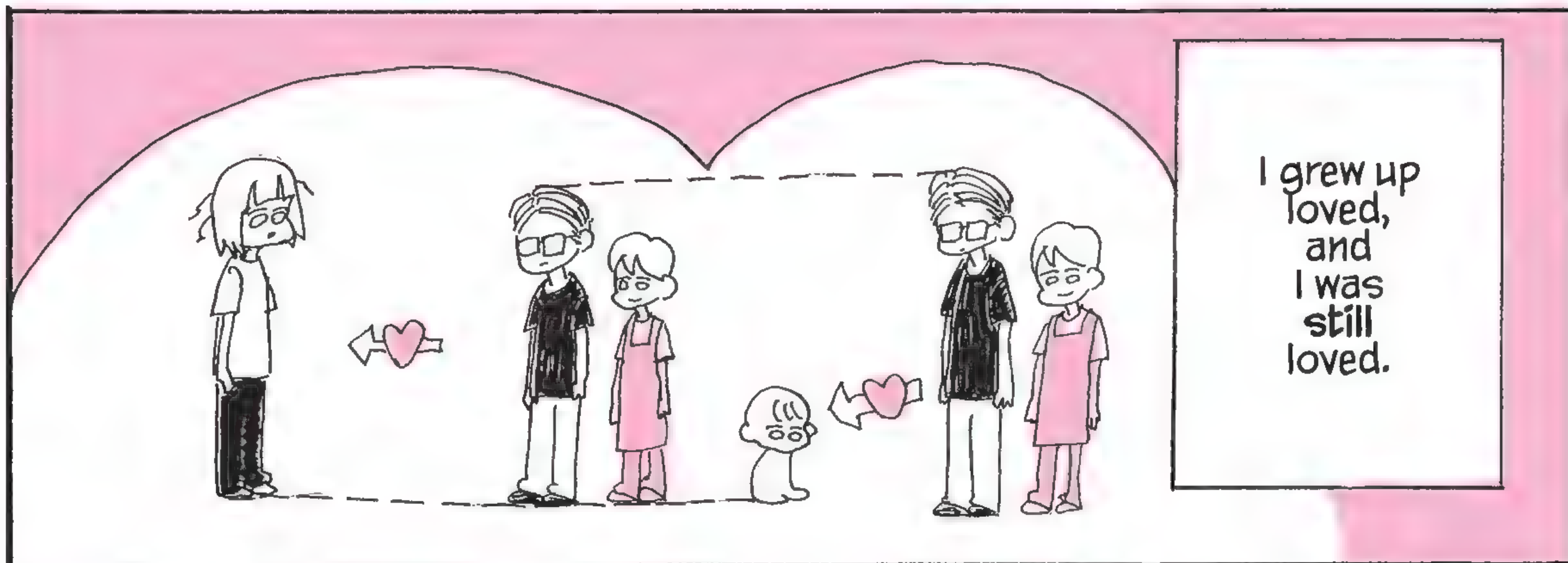
(OMITTED)
GRANDMA AND GRANDPA JUST HAPPENED
TO COME BY TODAY, SO IT WAS ALL OF US
TOGETHER, EATING LUNCH, CHATTING, AND
WATCHING THE VIDEOS OF YOU WHEN YOU
WERE JUST A WEE KABI... I REALIZED
THERE COULD BE NOTHING BETTER
ON EARTH.

(OMITTED)



My
existence
had been
totally
affirmed
then, and it
was totally
affirmed
now.



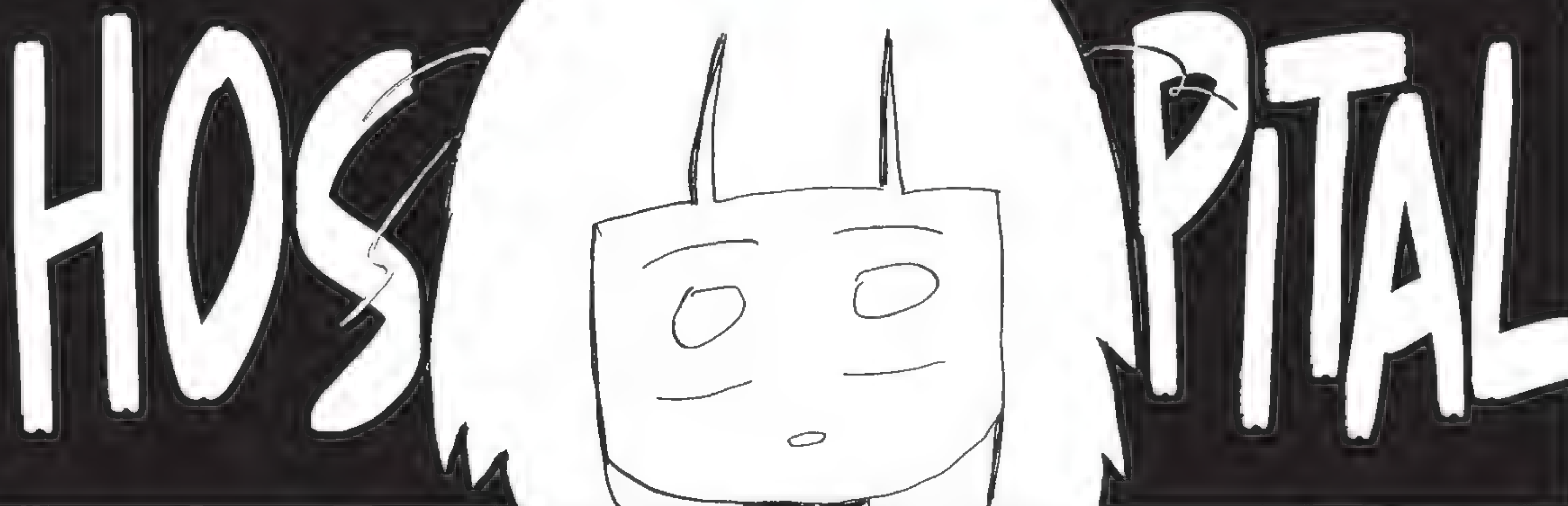


My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2

Dear
Nagata
Kabi...
This is
Nagata
Kabi.
Something
big
happened.

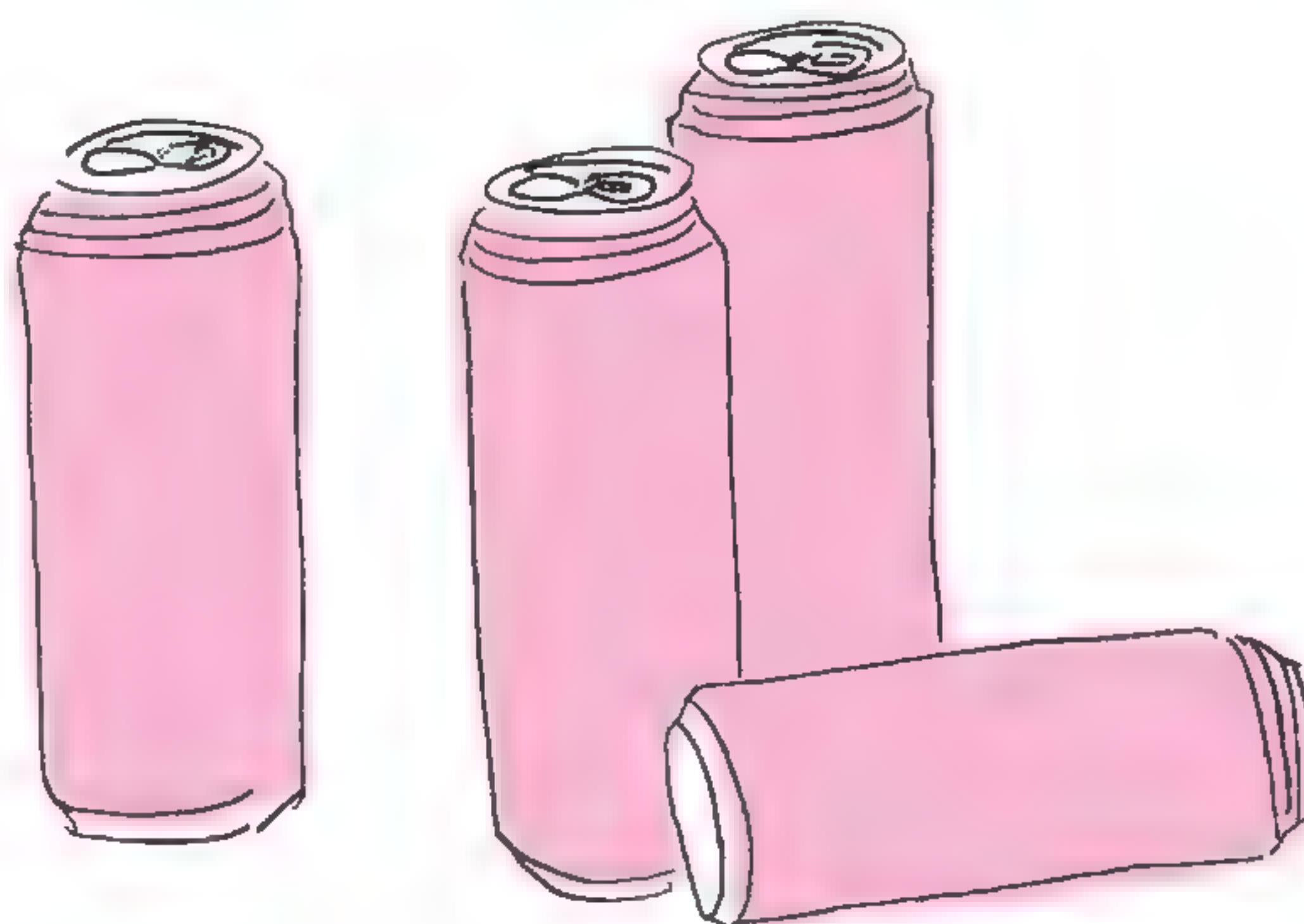


THE
DOCTOR
SAID THAT
MAYBE YOU
SHOULD
SPEND SOME
TIME IN THE
HOSPITAL.



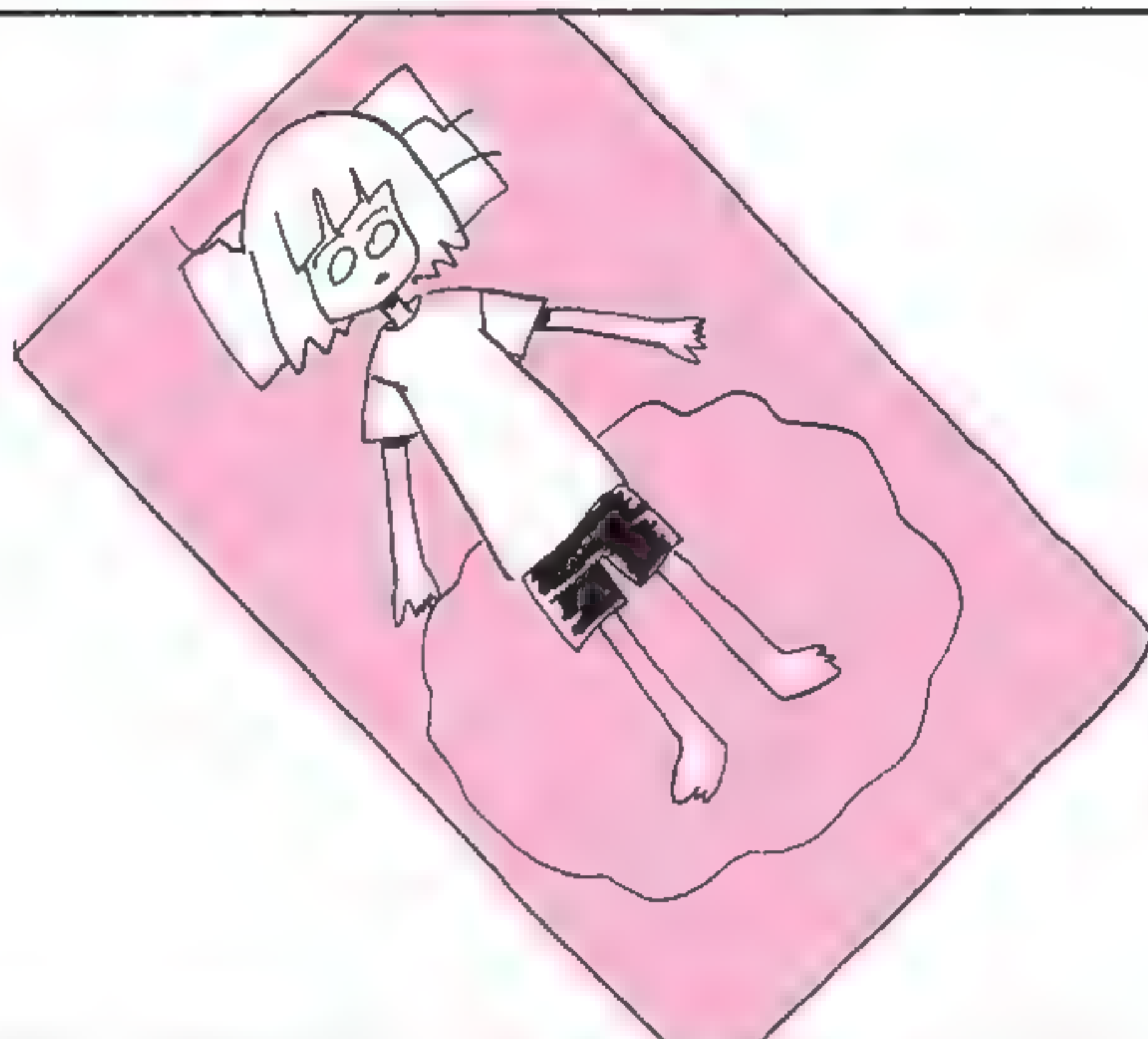
My mother
went alone
to my
doctor. He
recommended
hospitalization.

This all
started when
I had too
much to
drink and
wet the bed--
for days
in a row.





I'd wake
up to
a cold
futon
sucking
the heat
from my
lower
half.



It
happened
in the
night,
over and
over
again.



I cried
when
she said
the word
"hospital."



I was sad
that my
mother
and doctor
thought I was
abnormal
enough to be
hospitalized.



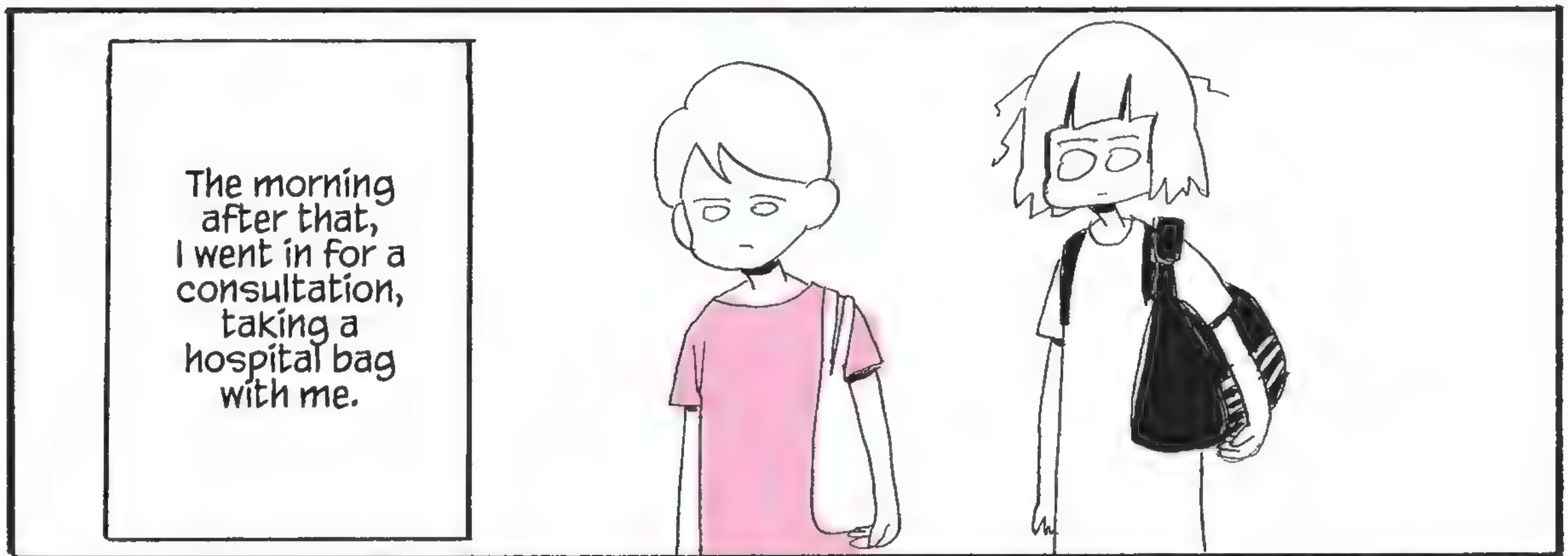
I'd been frustrated about the living alone thing, but hospitalization was so sad that I didn't think I could handle it.



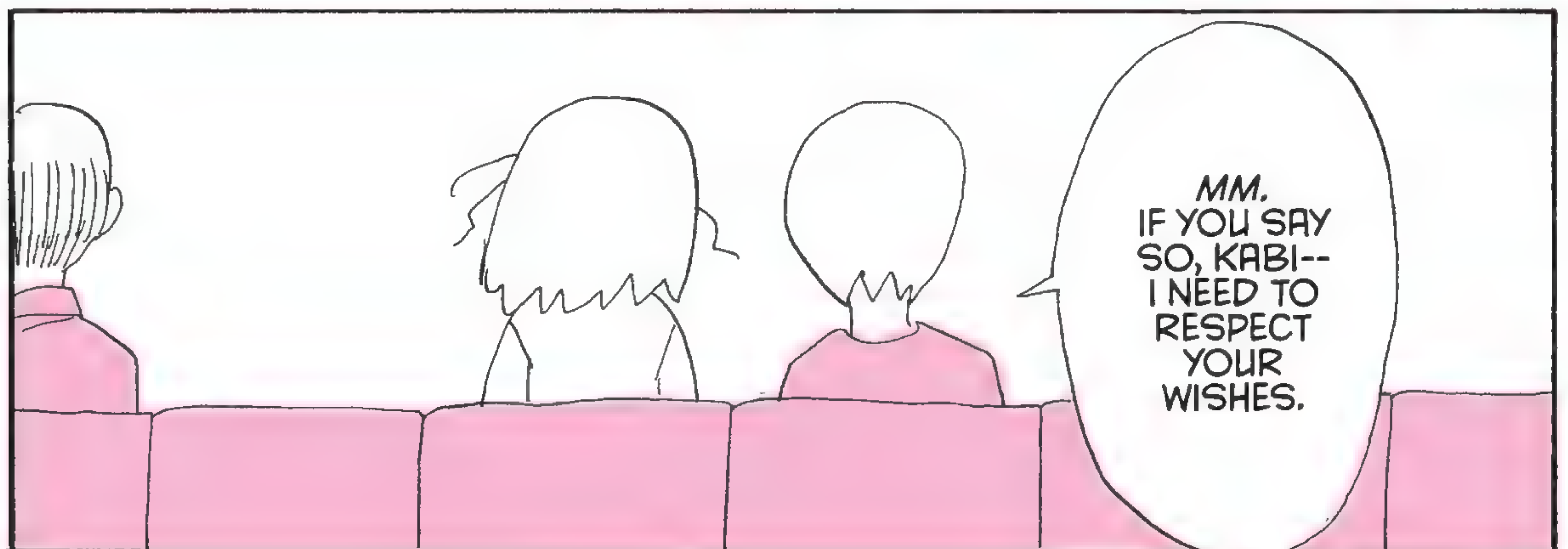
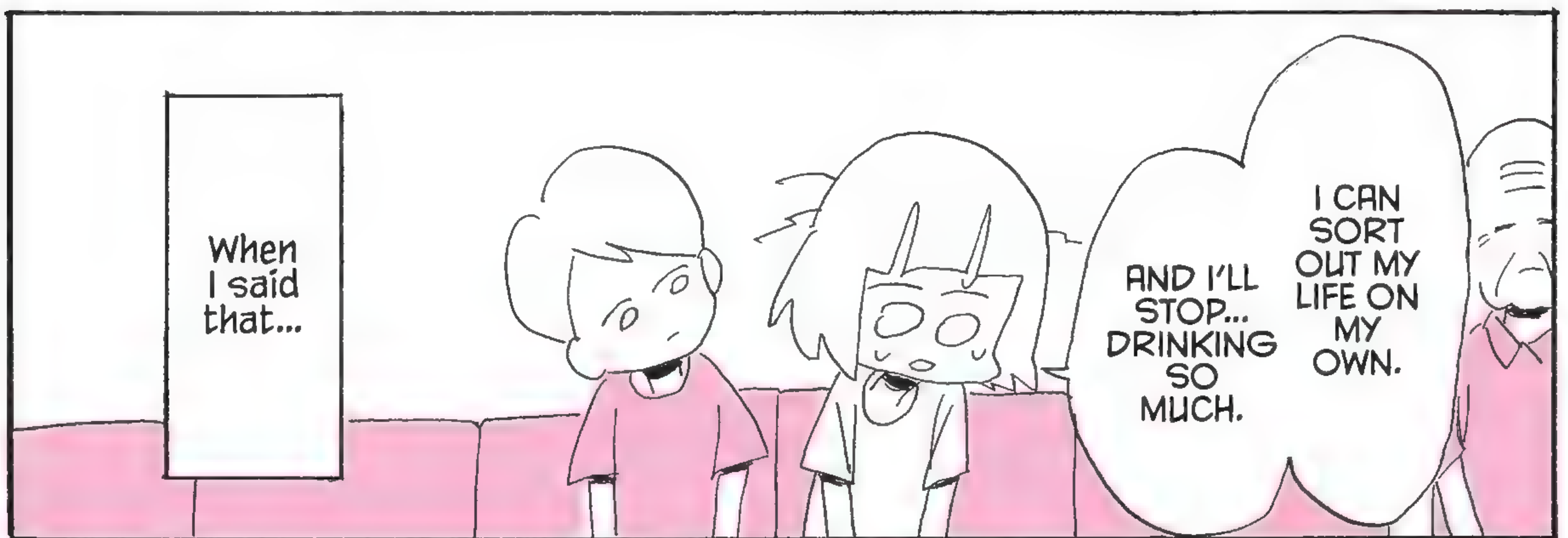
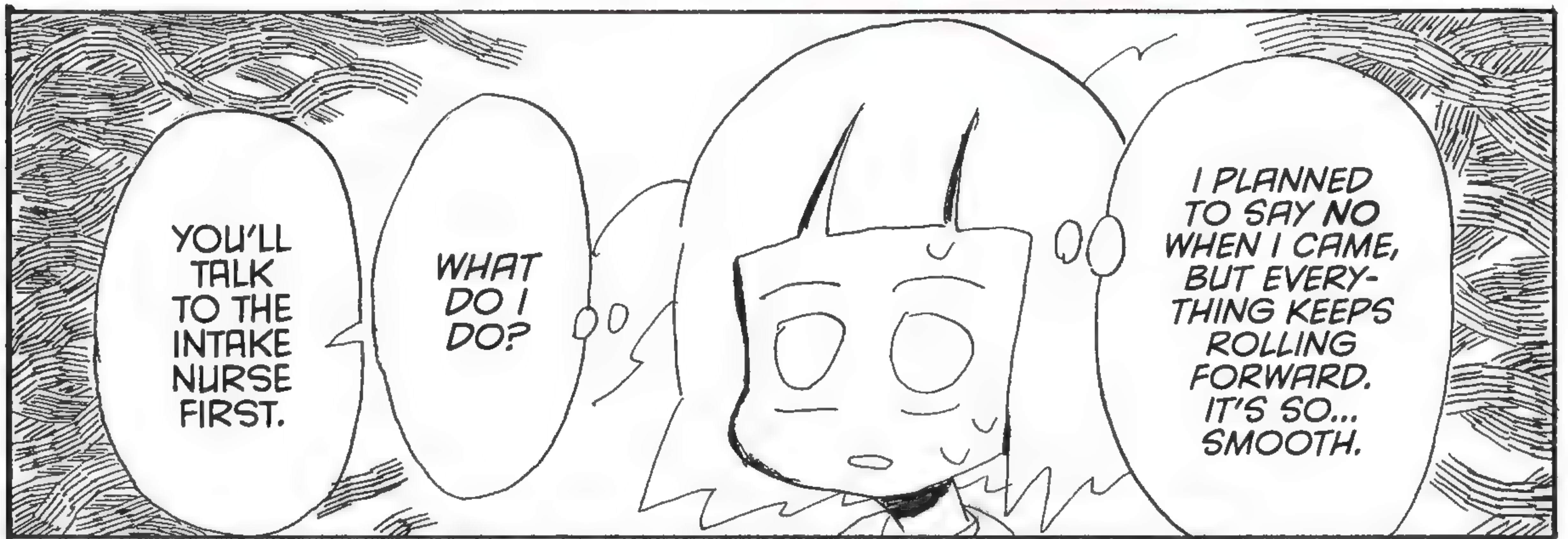
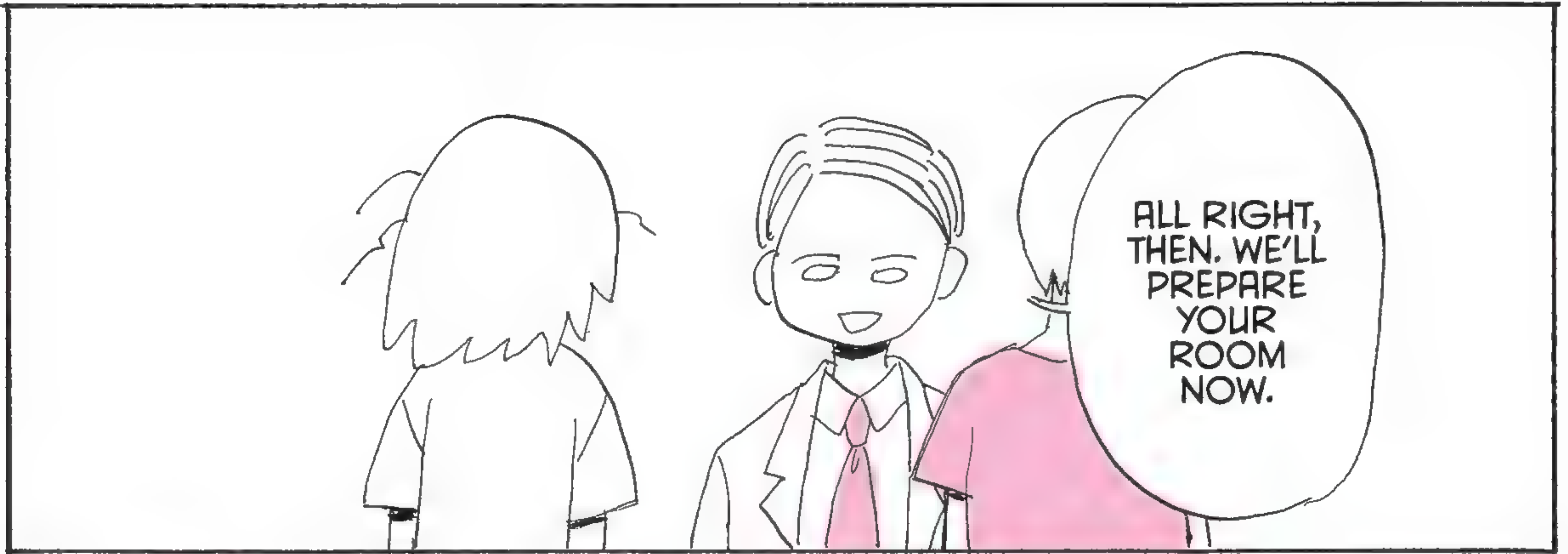
We went that day to the hospital the doctor suggested. We asked if there was an available room, and they said they'd let us know.

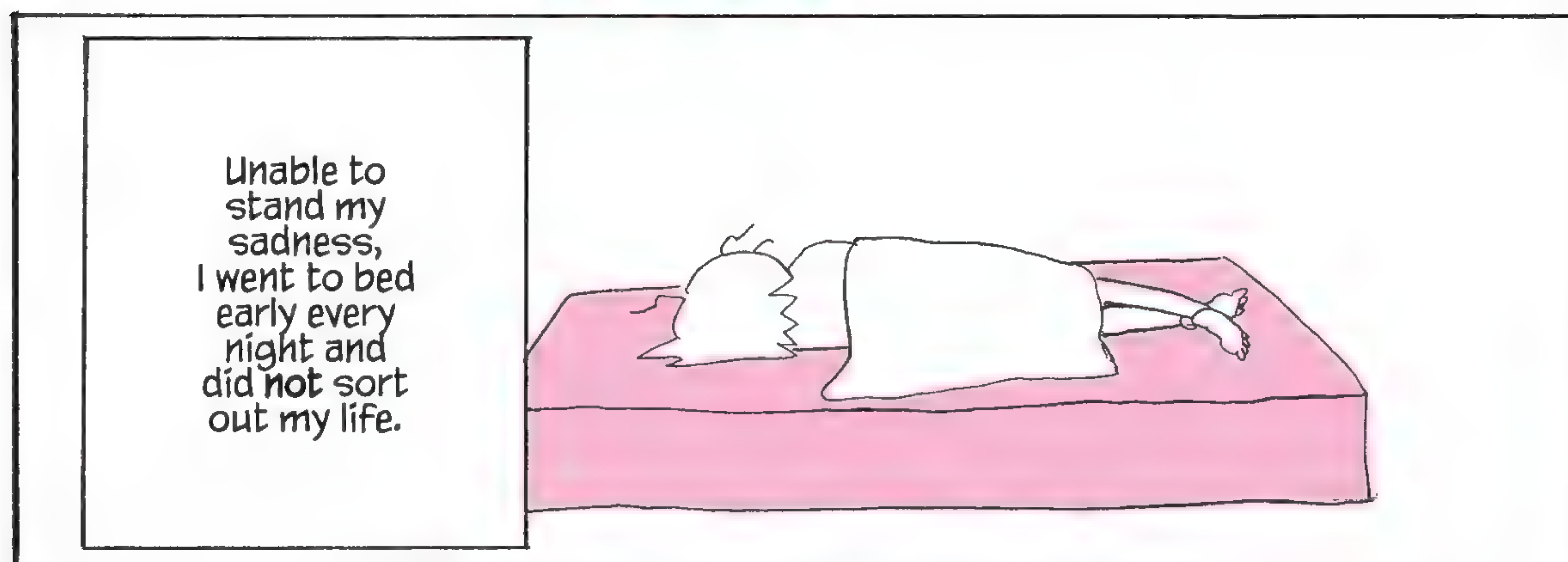
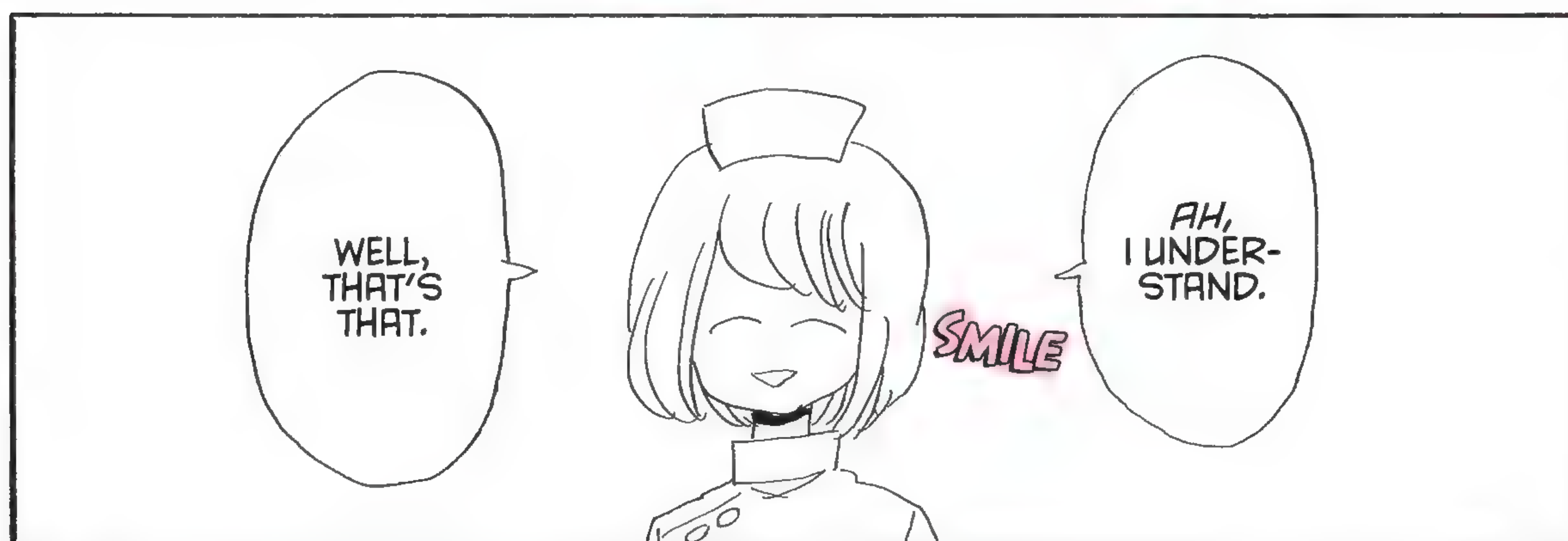
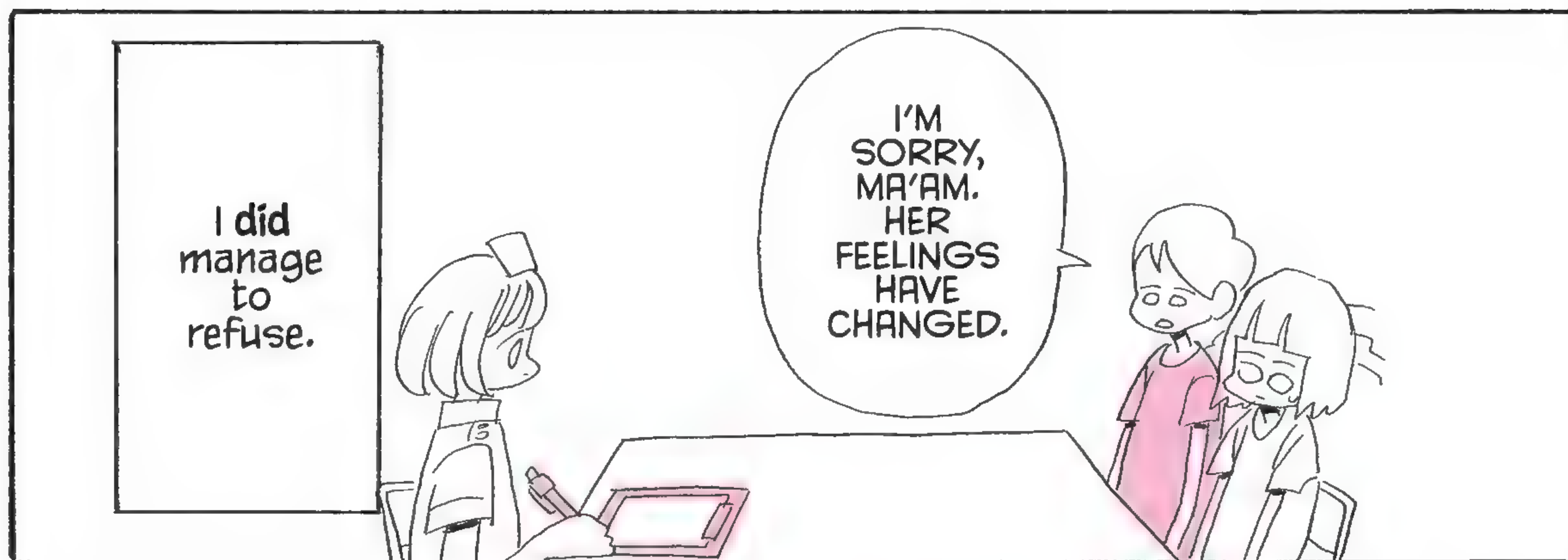


The next day, we got the call. They had an opening.



The morning after that, I went in for a consultation, taking a hospital bag with me.



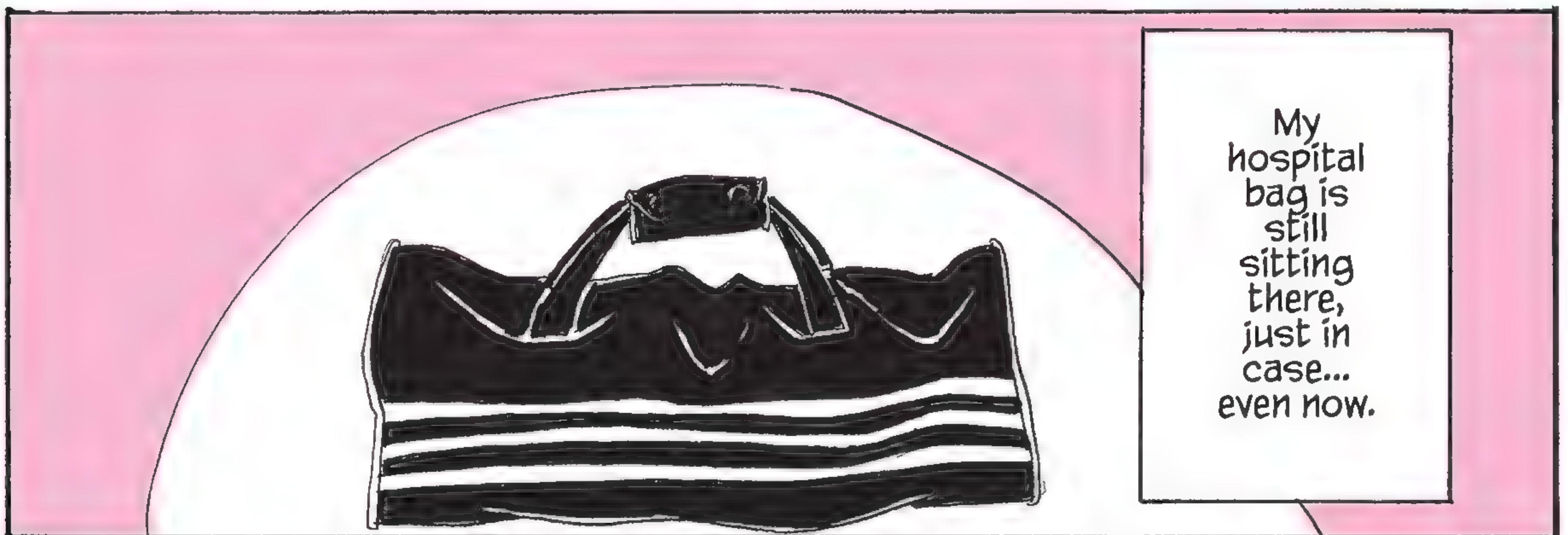




Two thoughts
ballooned inside
my head:
"Don't make
me go to the
hospital" and
"Don't hate
me, Mom."



I was
sad.
It hurt.
It was
so
hard.



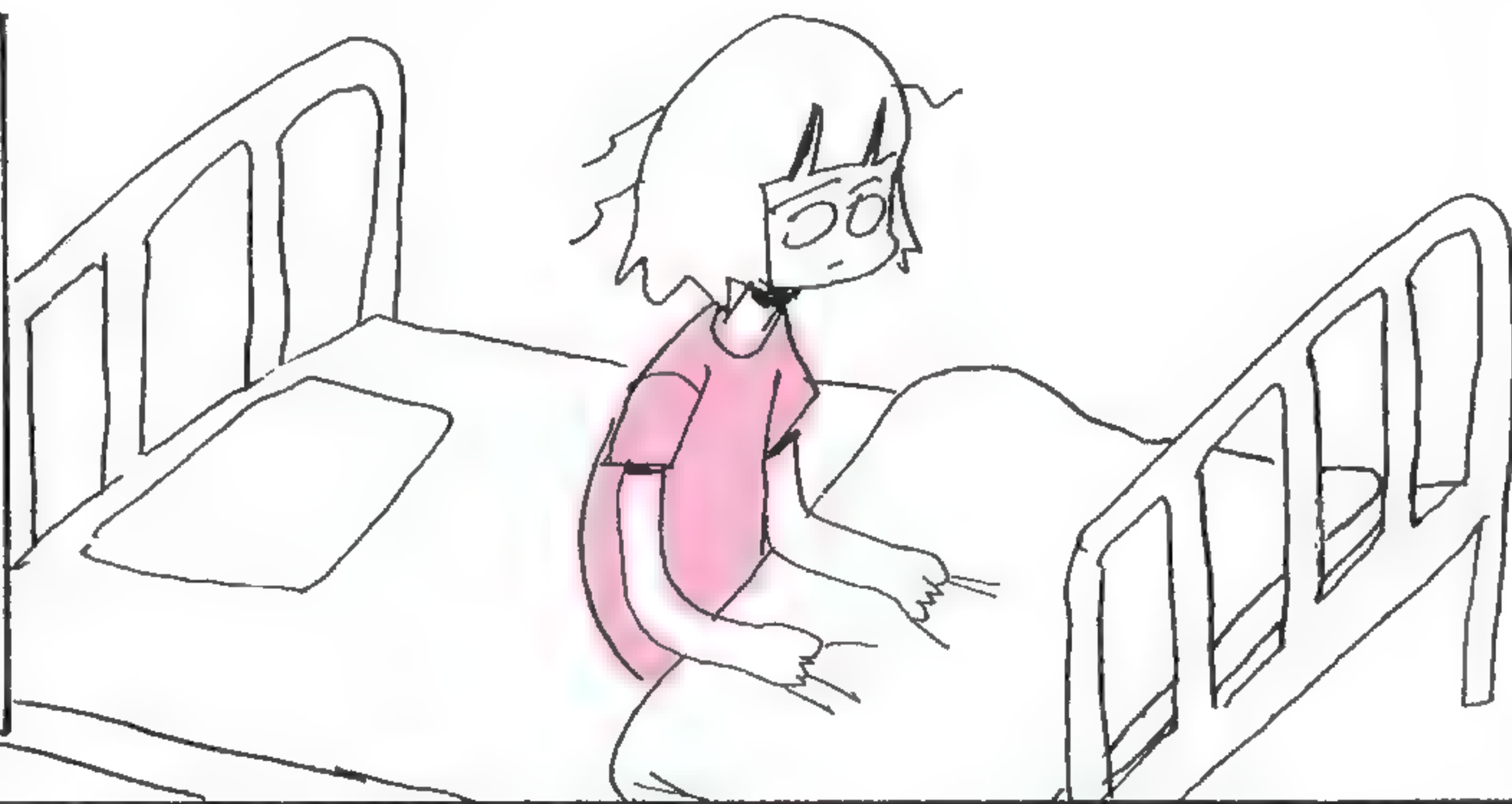
My
hospital
bag is
still
sitting
there,
just in
case...
even now.



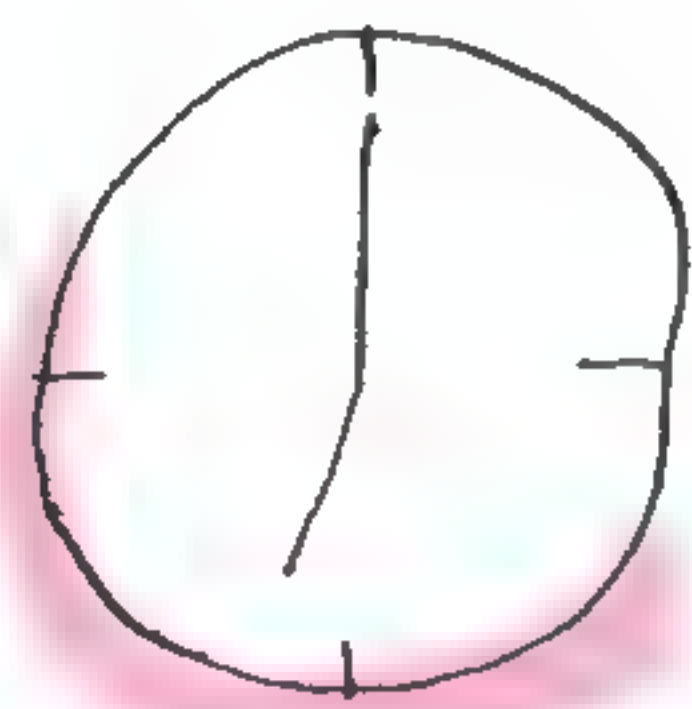
Future
Nagata
Kabi,
where are
you and
what are
you
doing...?

My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2

A few days after my last entry, I went to the hospital after all.

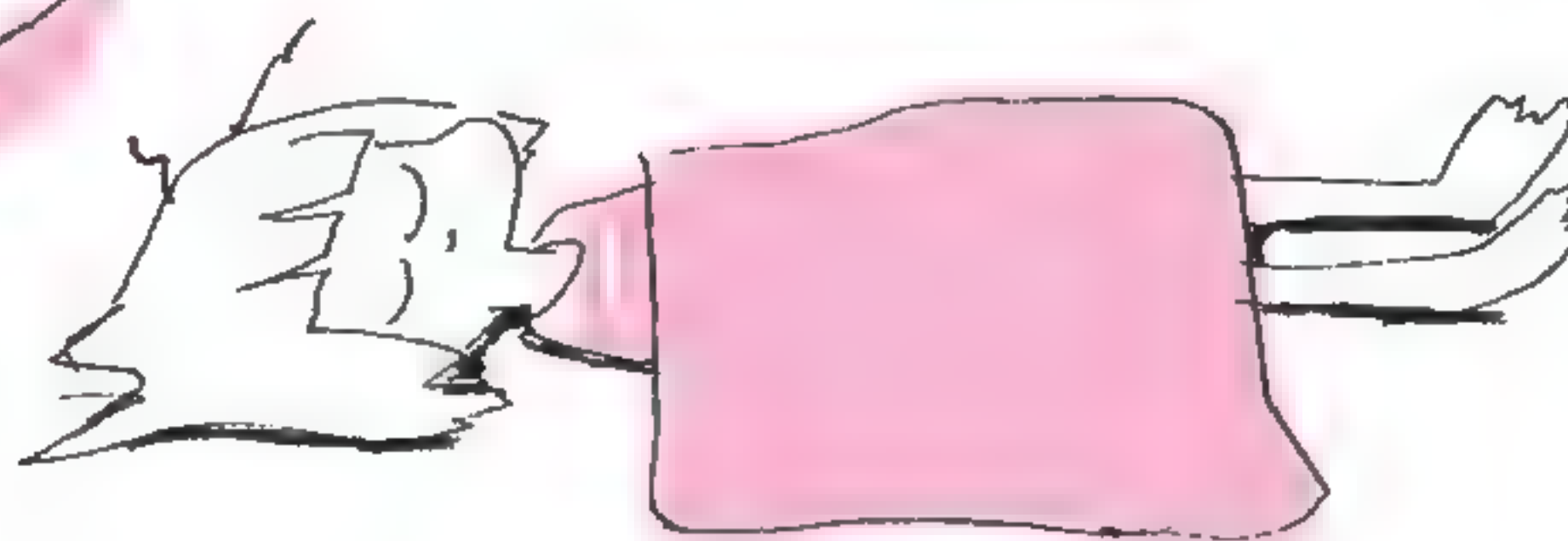
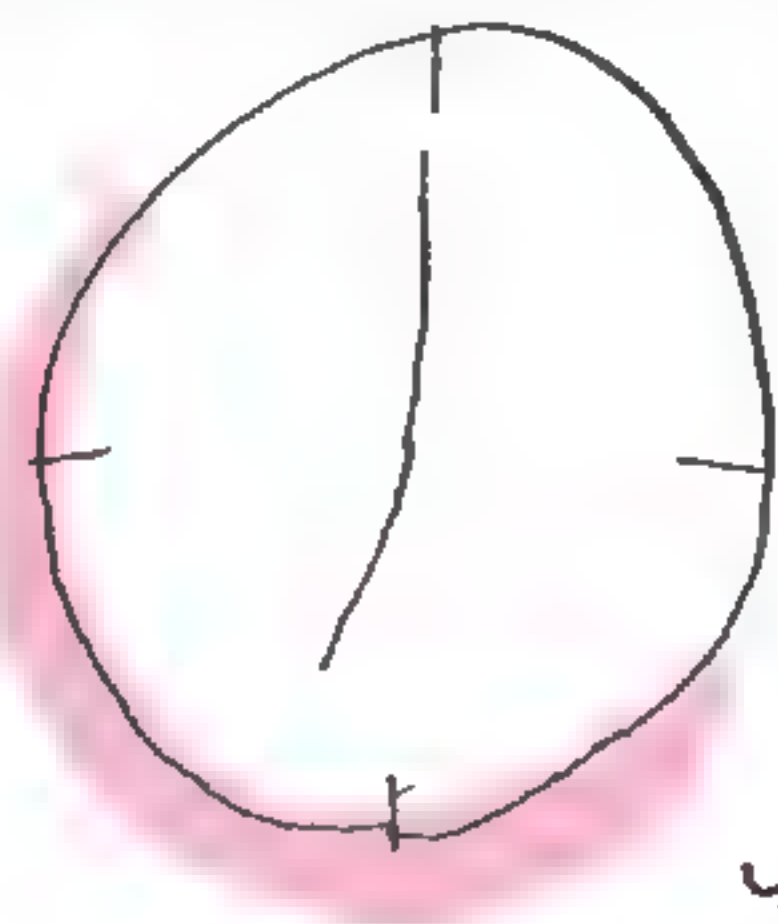
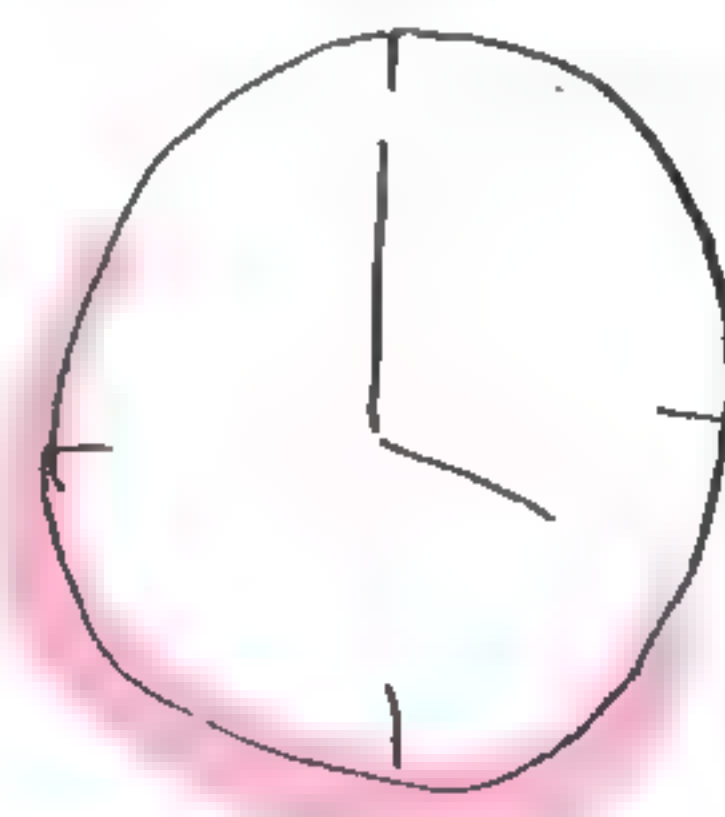
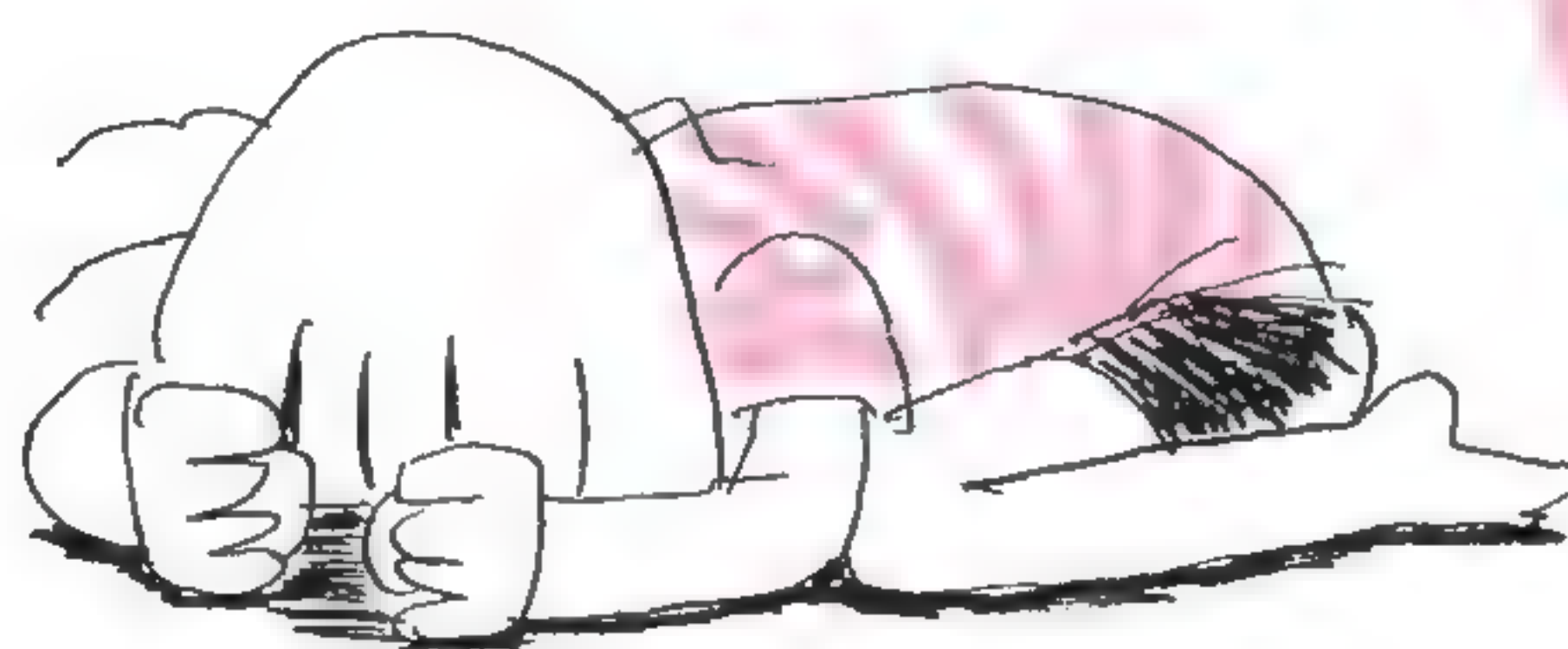


Dear Nagata Kabi... This is Nagata Kabi.



At the time, I'd been renting an apartment as a workspace since July. I went over early in the mornings.

By evening, it all got too heavy to bear, and I'd sink into sadness.



I'd return home, take sleeping pills, and go to bed early. That was my life.

And I
wanted
to get
out of
this
depressed
state.

ONLY
2:00 P.M.



I'M
ALREADY
SAD AND
WANNA
GO TO
BED.

Since all I was
doing was crawling
into bed early,
I thought it might
be better to stay
in the hospital.
At least there was
a rhythm to
life there.

My mom
called
them for
me and
got things
arranged
pretty
quick.



I got
more
positive
about
the
hospital.

On
the day
I left,
my dad
came
with
me.

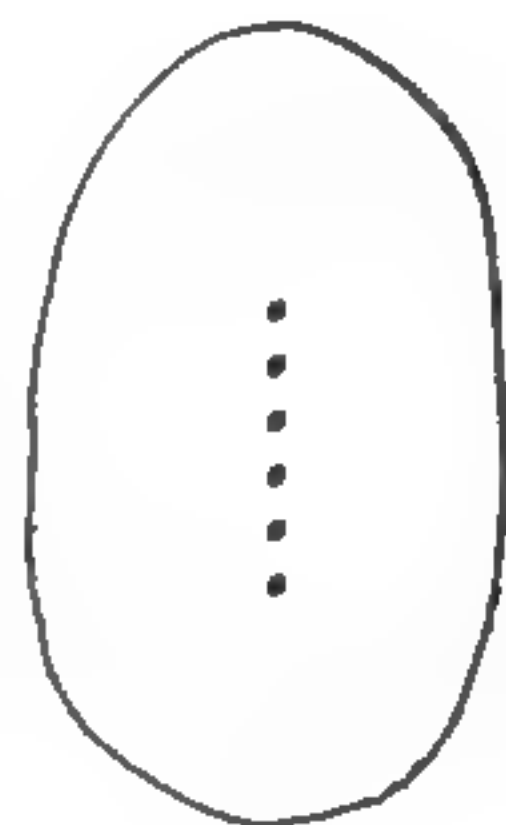


NO.



HAVEN'T
CHANGED
YOUR
MIND?

But I had
the feeling
it was for
some
extremely
kind reason,
and I
couldn't
ask.



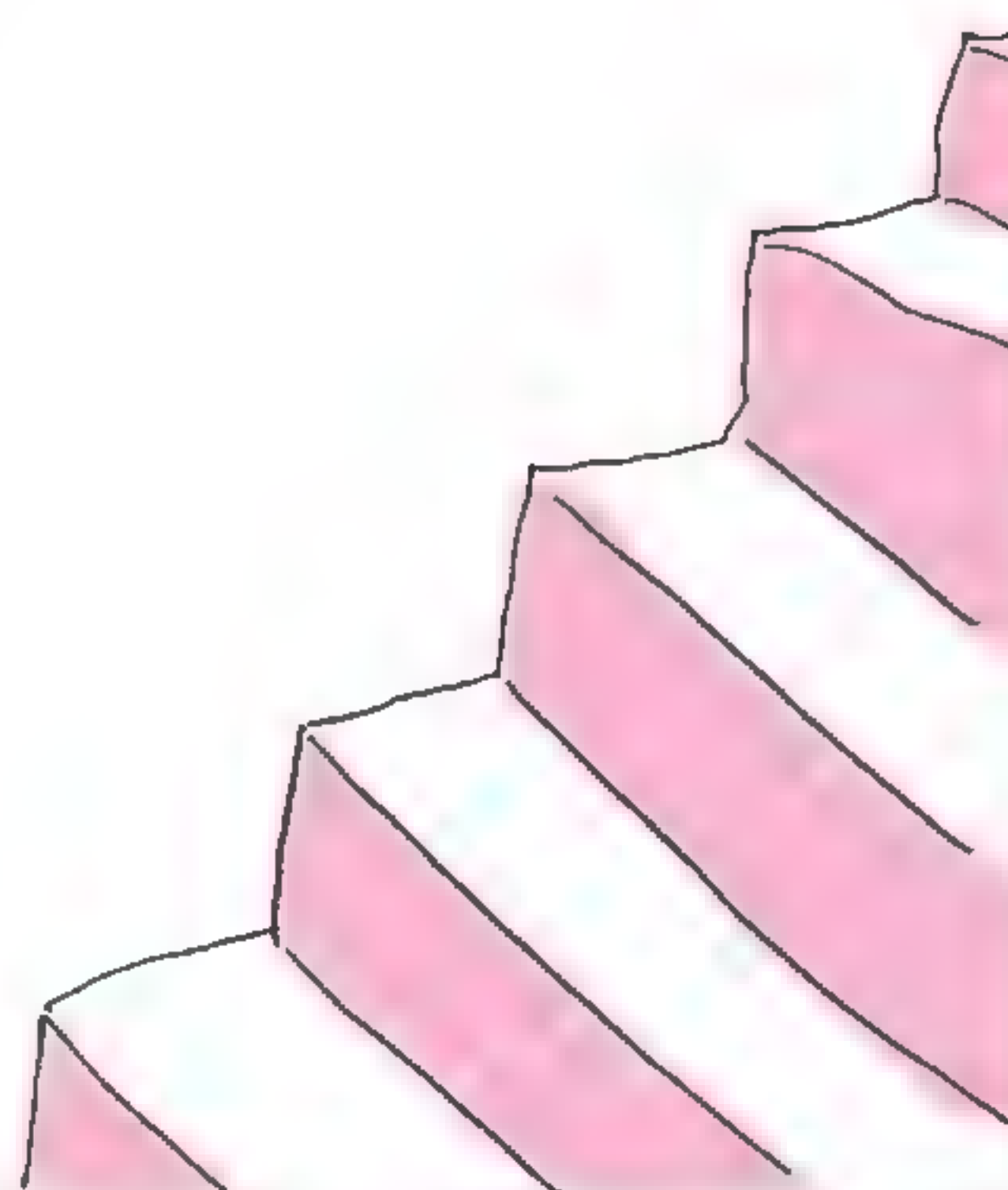
I wanted
to ask
why my
dad wasn't
that keen
on the
hospital.

THIS IS
POINT-
LESS...



I had
nothing
to do in the
hospital.
I just waited
for time
to pass.

My
mom
came
on the
second
day.



When she
went home,
she left so slow...
like she really
didn't want to
say goodbye.
It brought me
to tears.

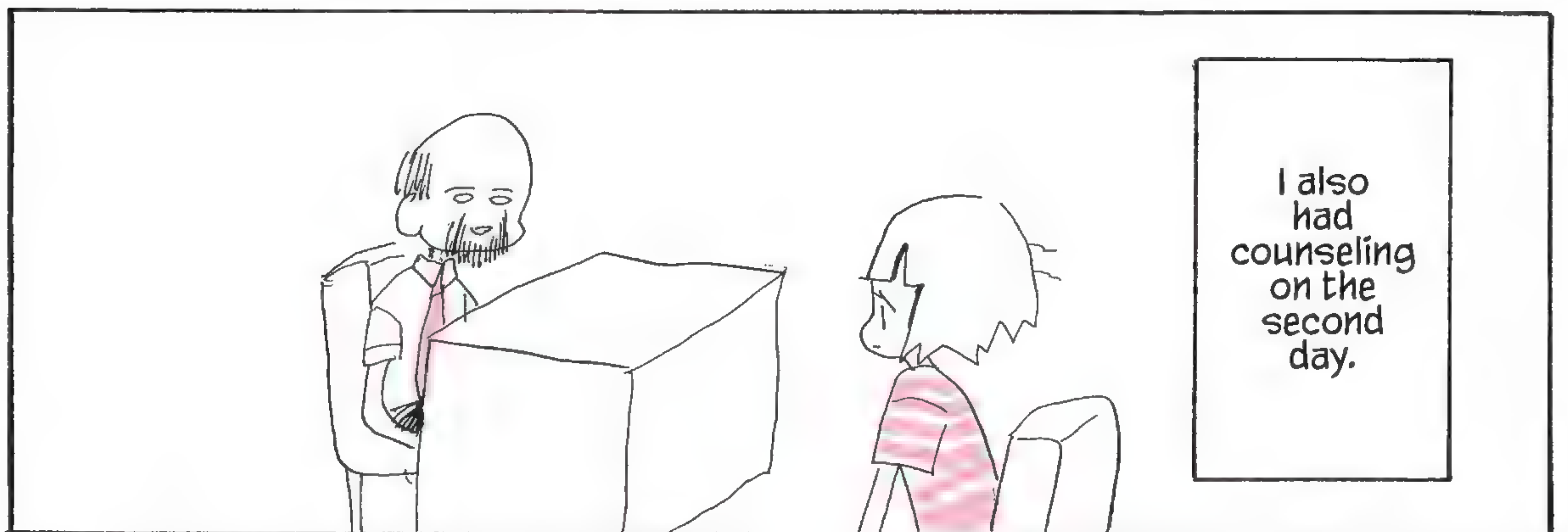




I was
drowning
in so
much love
for my
parents
that it got
a little
weird.



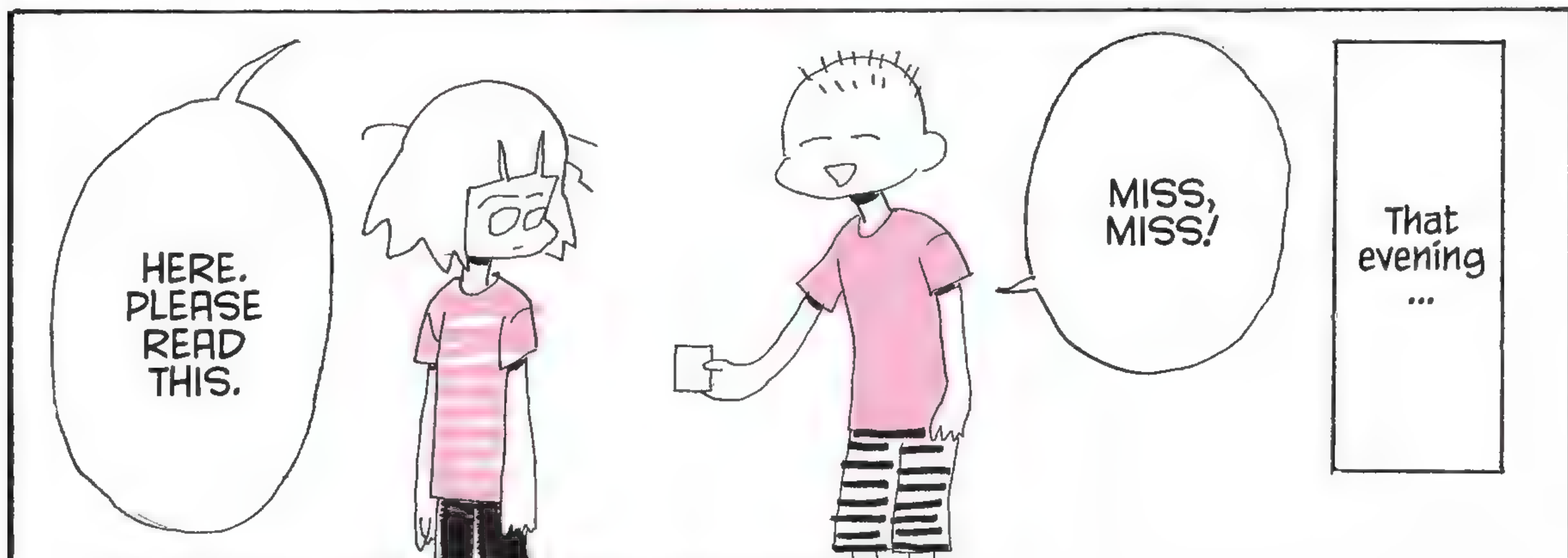
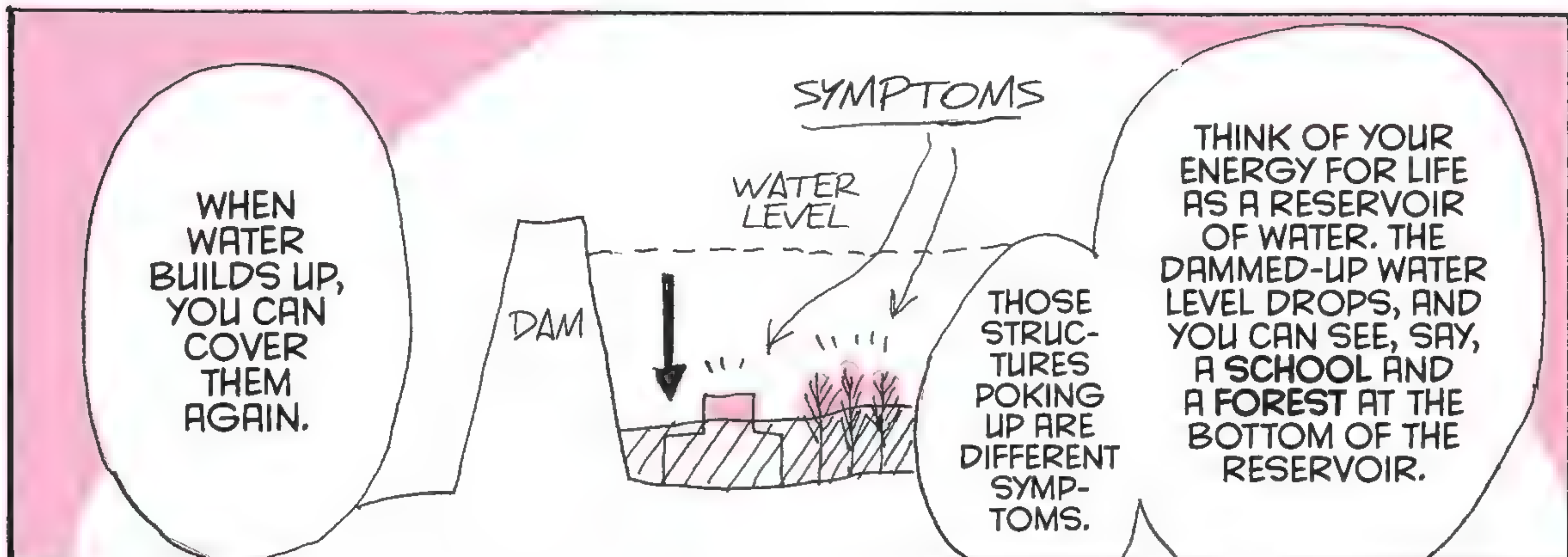
Still,
I was able
to eat at
mealtimes
and sleep
during
the night.



I also
had
counseling
on the
second
day.



WITH
DEPRESSION,
YOU SEE...





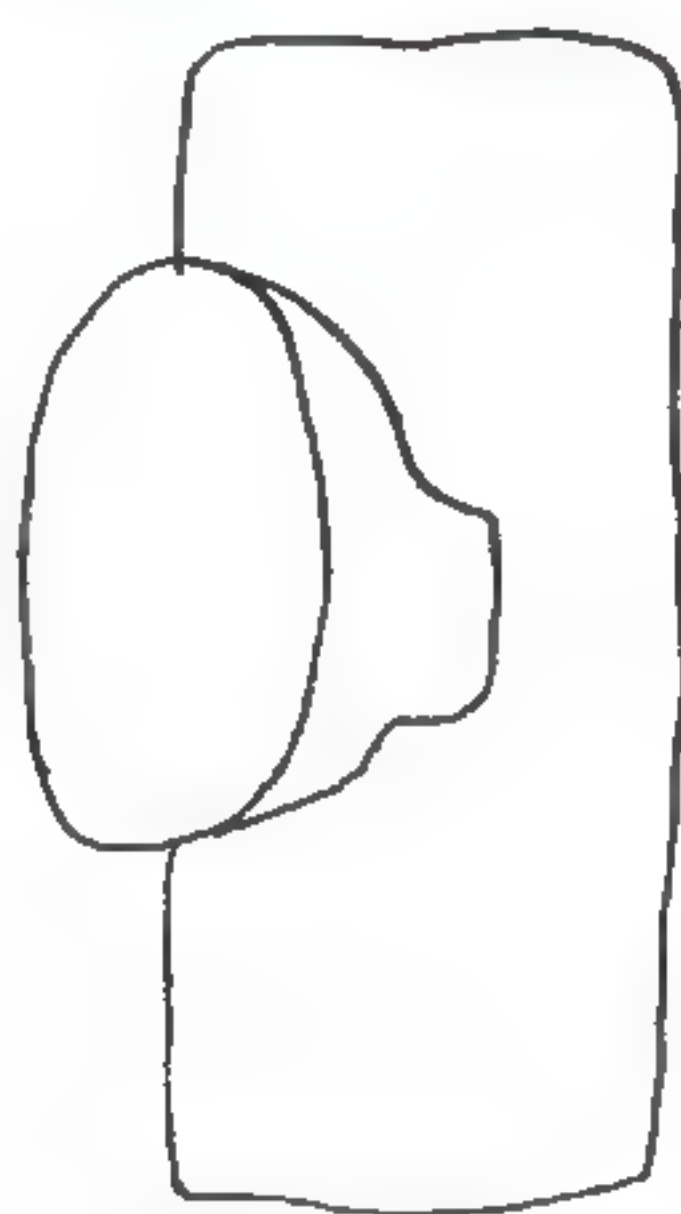
It had his
contact
information
on it, alongside,
"Would you
like to have
breakfast
together
tomorrow?"

His
room
was
right by
mine.

UH,
SURE.



THANKS.



And my
door
didn't
lock
from the
inside.

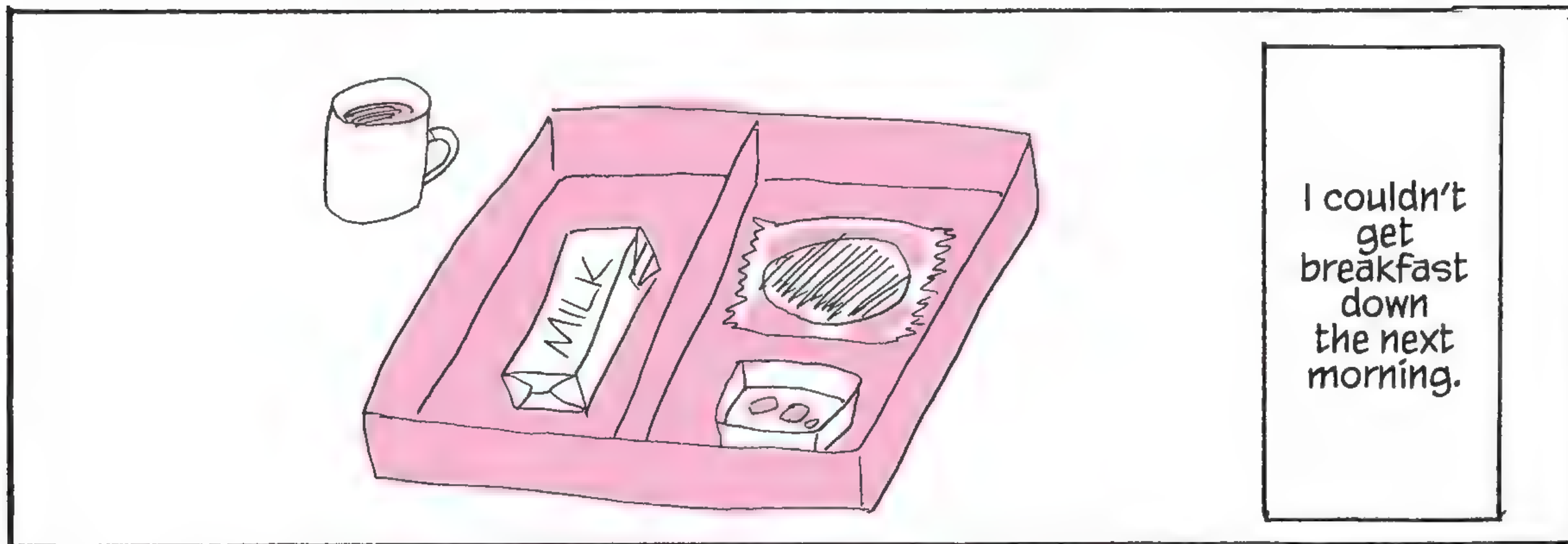
Maybe
I was
over-
thinking
it, but
I got
scared.



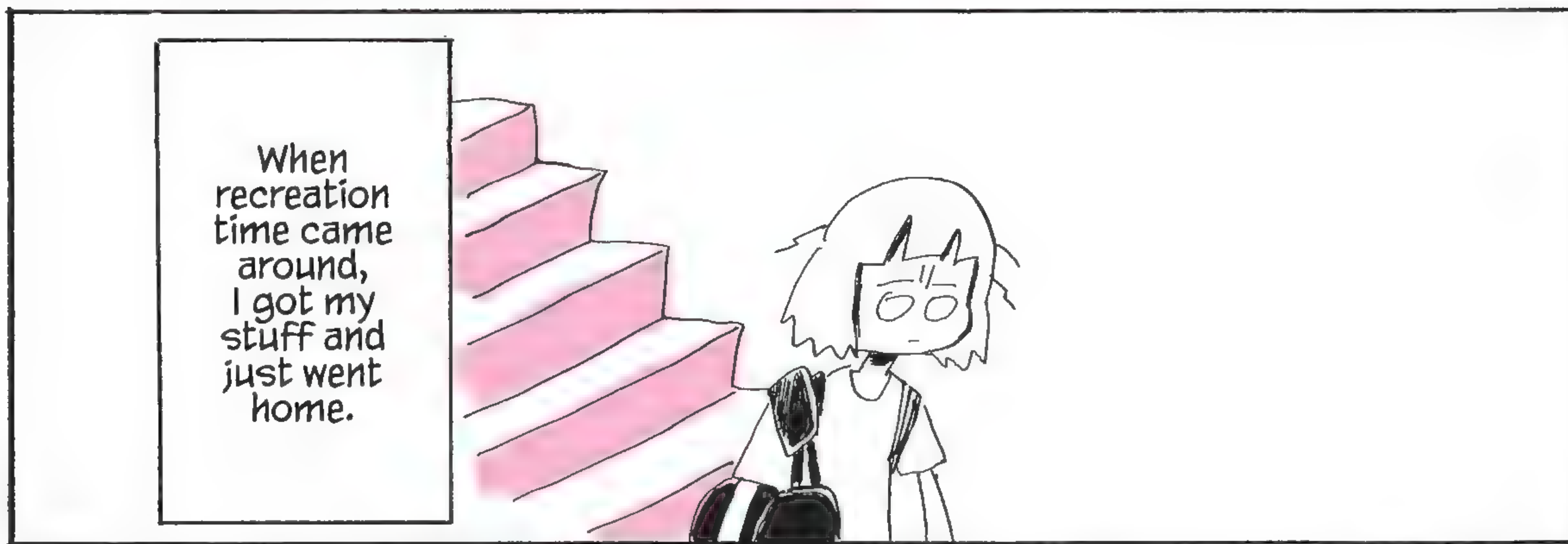


That became the only thought in my mind.

I'M GOING HOME.



I couldn't get breakfast down the next morning.

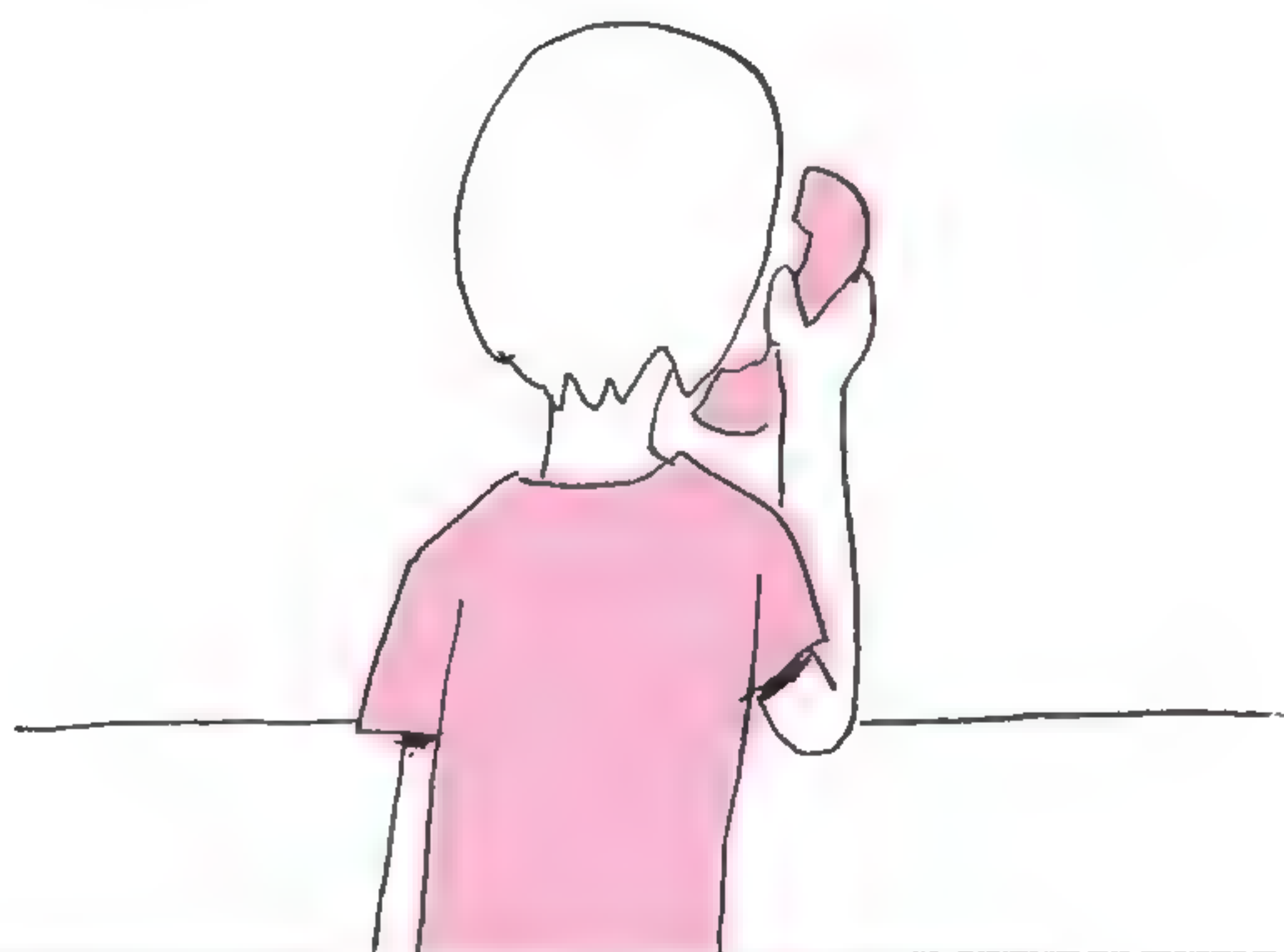


When recreation time came around, I got my stuff and just went home.

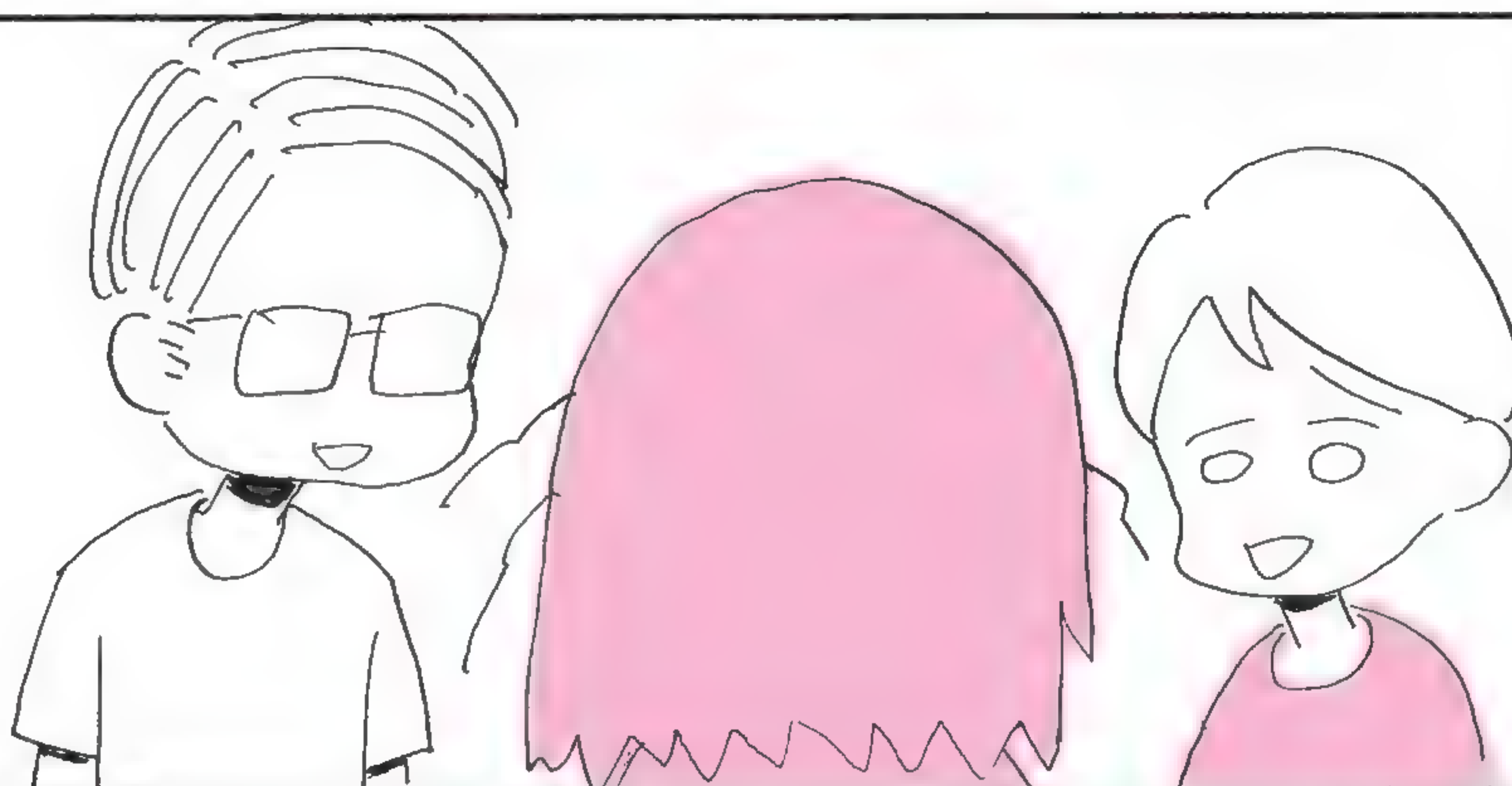


I couldn't tell the nurse I was leaving.

and they
ended up
accepting
my
voluntary
discharge.

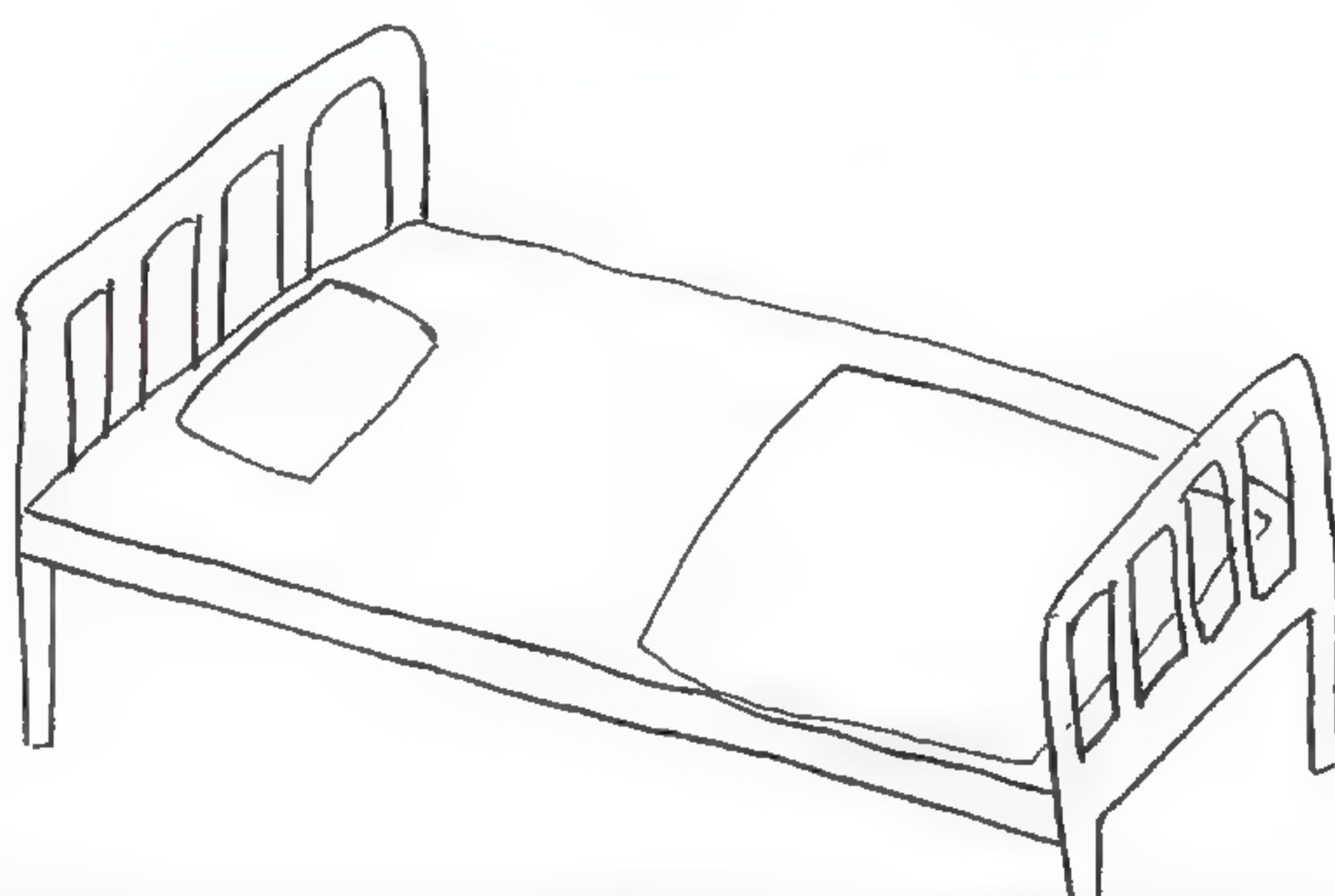


At home,
my mom
called
the
hospital
for me...



My parents
welcomed
me home
with:
"It's fine,
it happens."

Those
were my
three
short
(yet long)
days
in the
hospital.



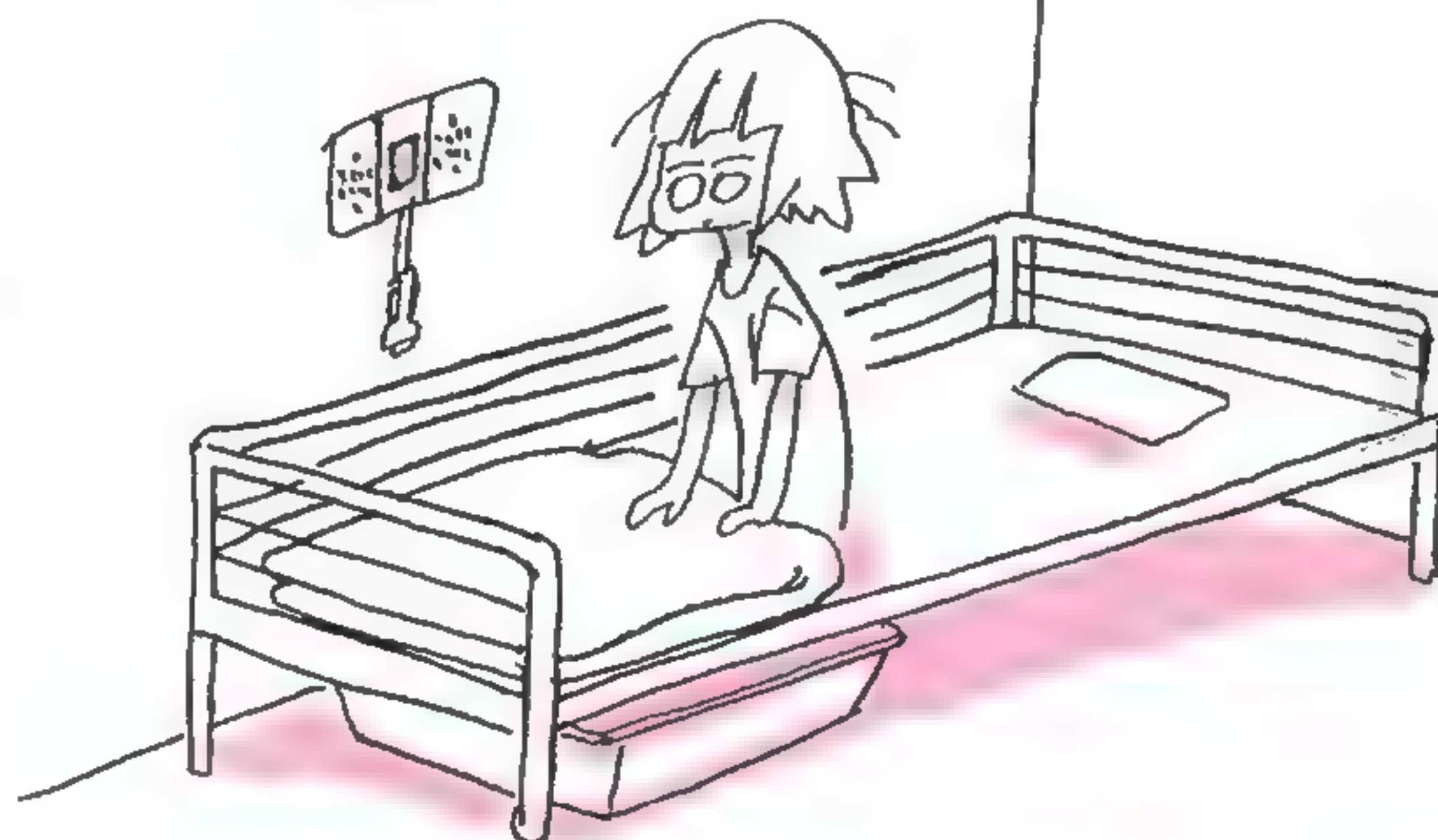
Future
Nagata
Kabi,
are you
a little
better
now?



I felt
a lot of
love from
my parents
through
the whole
thing,
too.

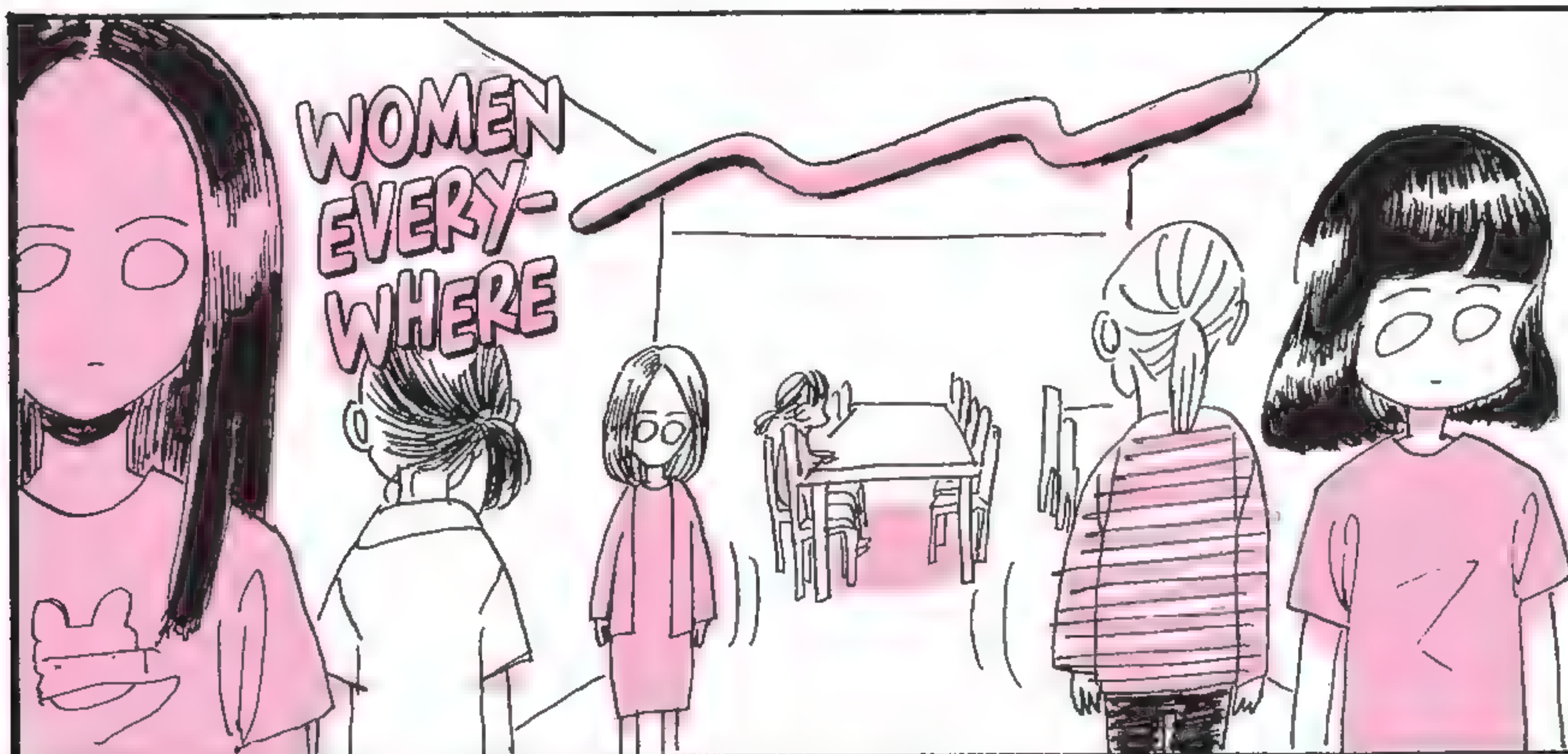
My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2

My last trip to the hospital was incomplete, so I went back for another round.



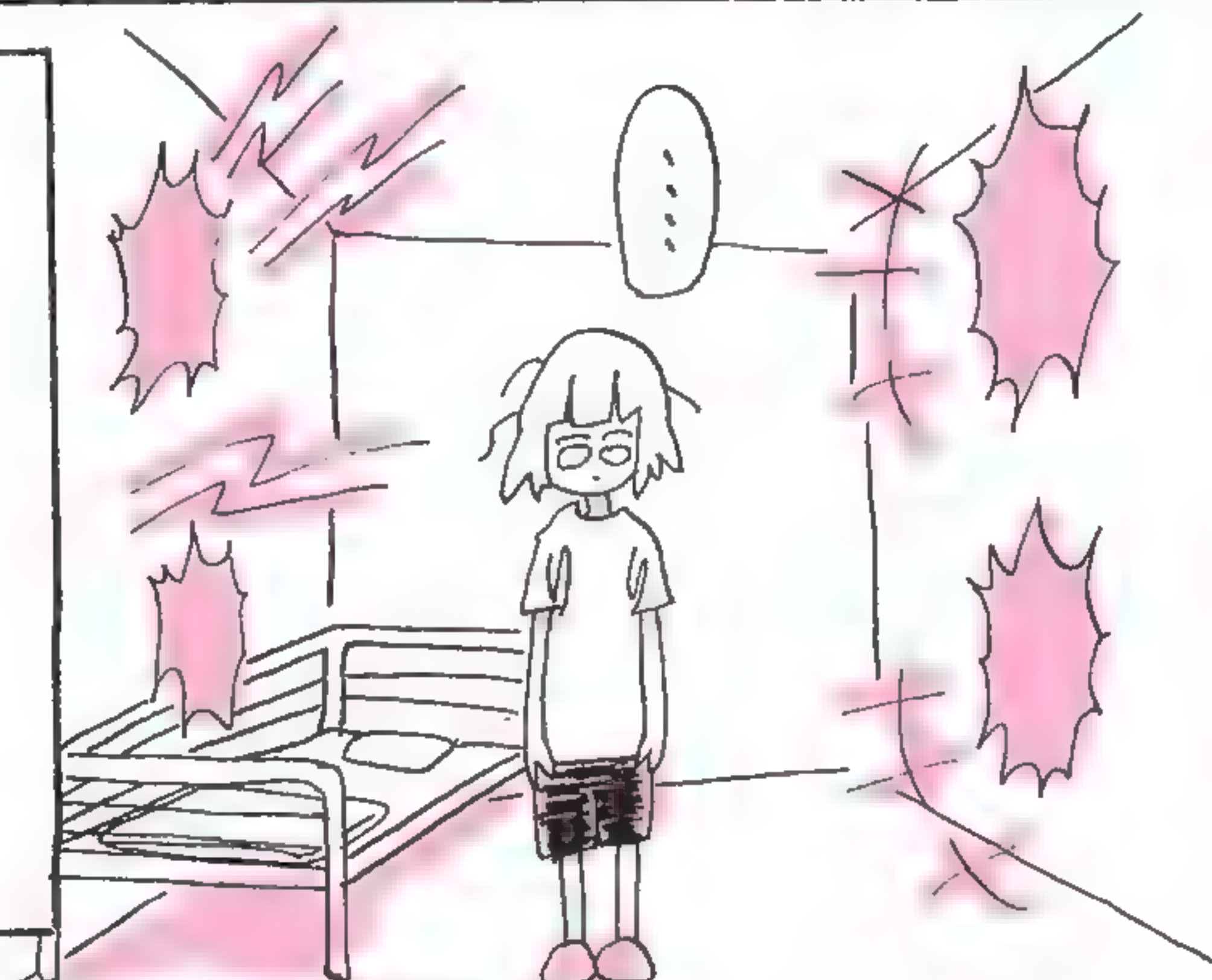
Dear Nagata Kabi... This is Nagata Kabi.

WOMEN EVERY-WHERE



This time, I was in a wing for women, and a lot of them were seriously ill.

One woman was hallucinating that someone was in there with her, and she'd constantly talk to them or laugh with them--until she got mad and yelled at them.



I heard people talk and shout and rage to themselves on both sides of me.

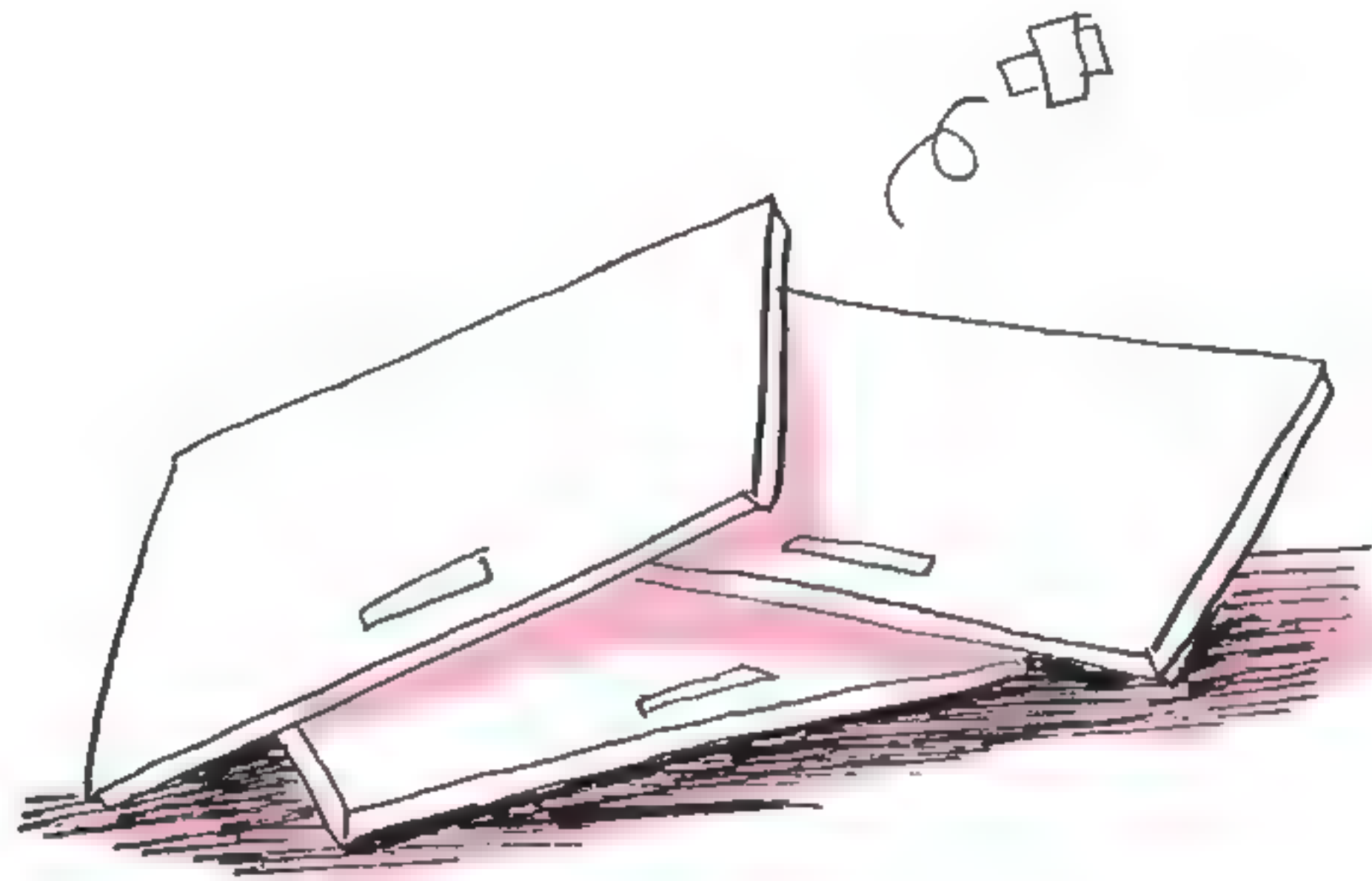
8/2 • I WANTED TO DO SOME DOODLING AND DIDN'T FEEL LIKE READING MANGA, SO I DOODLED A LOT.

• I'M GLAD IT WAS OKAY TO BRING WRITING SUPPLIES.

• THE HEIGHT OF THIS DESK AND CHAIR MAKE MY NECK HURT.

I kept a journal while I was in the hospital.

But I managed to fall asleep again.

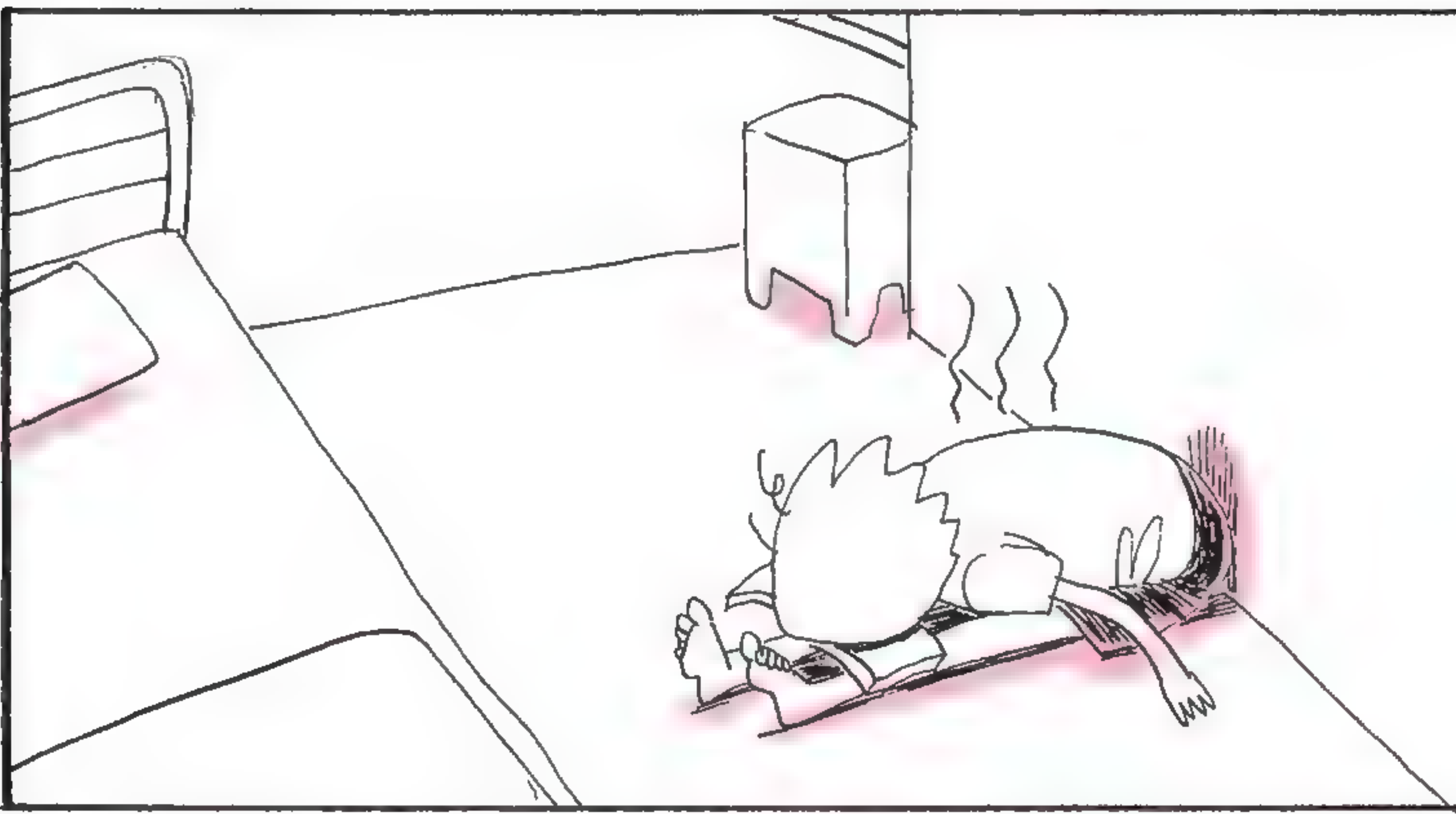


In the middle of my first night, the person next door freaked out and ripped three sliding doors out of the walls.

I wanted the passion and enthusiasm to draw like that.



On the second day, I felt like reading manga, so I did. I read something with clever art and a first chapter that set up a bunch of things; I was jealous of that skill.



You need to plan out the set-ups in advance-- that makes a good story. I wanted to come up with stuff like that. I wanted that excitement.

8/3 • MOM CAME. SHE BROUGHT HERBAL TEA.

• I'VE FELT SO MUCH LOVE FOR MY FAMILY LATELY THAT I CAN HARDLY STAND IT. I WONDER IF THEY'RE OKAY, IF THEY'RE PEACEFUL.

• AFTER THEY LEAVE, I GET SAD.

• FELT LIKE DOODLING AGAIN TODAY. DREW A LOT.



I didn't get
anxious,
and I had the
energy to
read manga
and doodle.
Amazing.

8/4 • WHEN WE WERE OUT FOR A WALK, MY MOM
REMEMBERED SOME STUFF THAT I DREW
A LONG TIME AGO, AND I NEARLY CRIED.

• TOOK A BATH.



I couldn't
see my family
and I couldn't
draw anything
well. I couldn't
come up with
anything.

I read
manga again.
I wondered
why I hadn't
written the
great book
in my hand.



Mom,
Mom, Mom.
And despair
for myself
and how
powerless
I was.

I thought
about
my mom
constantly,
and I
couldn't
stop
crying.
It was a
problem.

8/5 • I SAW MY PRIMARY PHYSICIAN ON THE STAIRS.
HE SPOKE TO ME, AND I WAS HAPPY HE
REMEMBERED ME.

• OT (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY).

• ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.

It said my
"estimated
term of
hospitalization"
was six
months.

ESTIMATED TERM
OF HOSPITALIZATION.

6 MONTHS

I got the
Diagnosis
and
Treatment
Plan that
day, and I
couldn't
believe
my eyes.

I'm lonely.
It's too
much.
Lonely,
lonely.
Too
lonely.



I didn't
want
to be
there
six
months.

I wanted
to dream
that I
could hear
my dad
snoring
from the
other
room.



I wanted
to
dream
of being
in bed
at
home.



The strength slipped right out of me. I just stared into space.



Seeing my family from time to time wasn't enough. Lonelylonely lonelylonely.

The next day, my loneliness exploded.

8/6 • MOM MIGHT COME SEE ME TODAY, AND DAD SAID HE'LL COME ON THURSDAY.

• I WANNA GO HOME.

• SIX MONTHS WOULD BE AWFUL. IT'S TOO MUCH. I'M DEFINITELY GONNA FIGHT IT. I'M SO, SO LONELY-- I CAN'T TAKE IT.



I stared out the window until I saw my mom walk up, then I burst into tears.



My mom
lent me a book,
but just the
thought that
she'd read the
same words
started up
my waterworks,
and I couldn't
finish it.

I really got
lonelier *after*
a visit. I started
to think that it
didn't matter how
hard it was or
how depressed
I was--
I still wanted
to go home.



And I was,
actually.
I drank a
ton of
water
every
day.



I got the
results of my
blood tests.
My sodium
was low,
so they asked
if I was maybe
drinking too
much water.

I wanted
them to
at least
let me be
addicted
to *water*.
I was so
lonely.



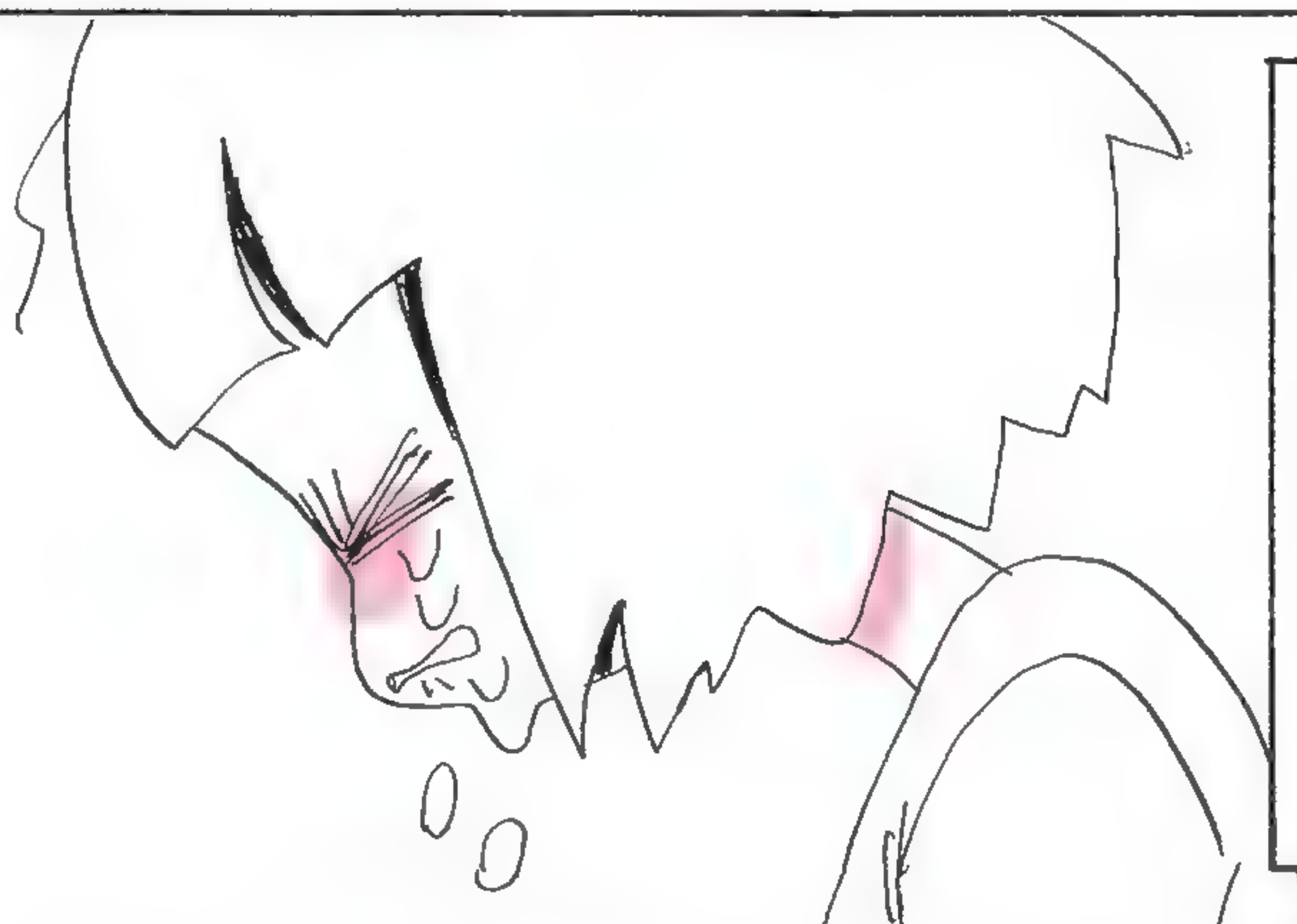
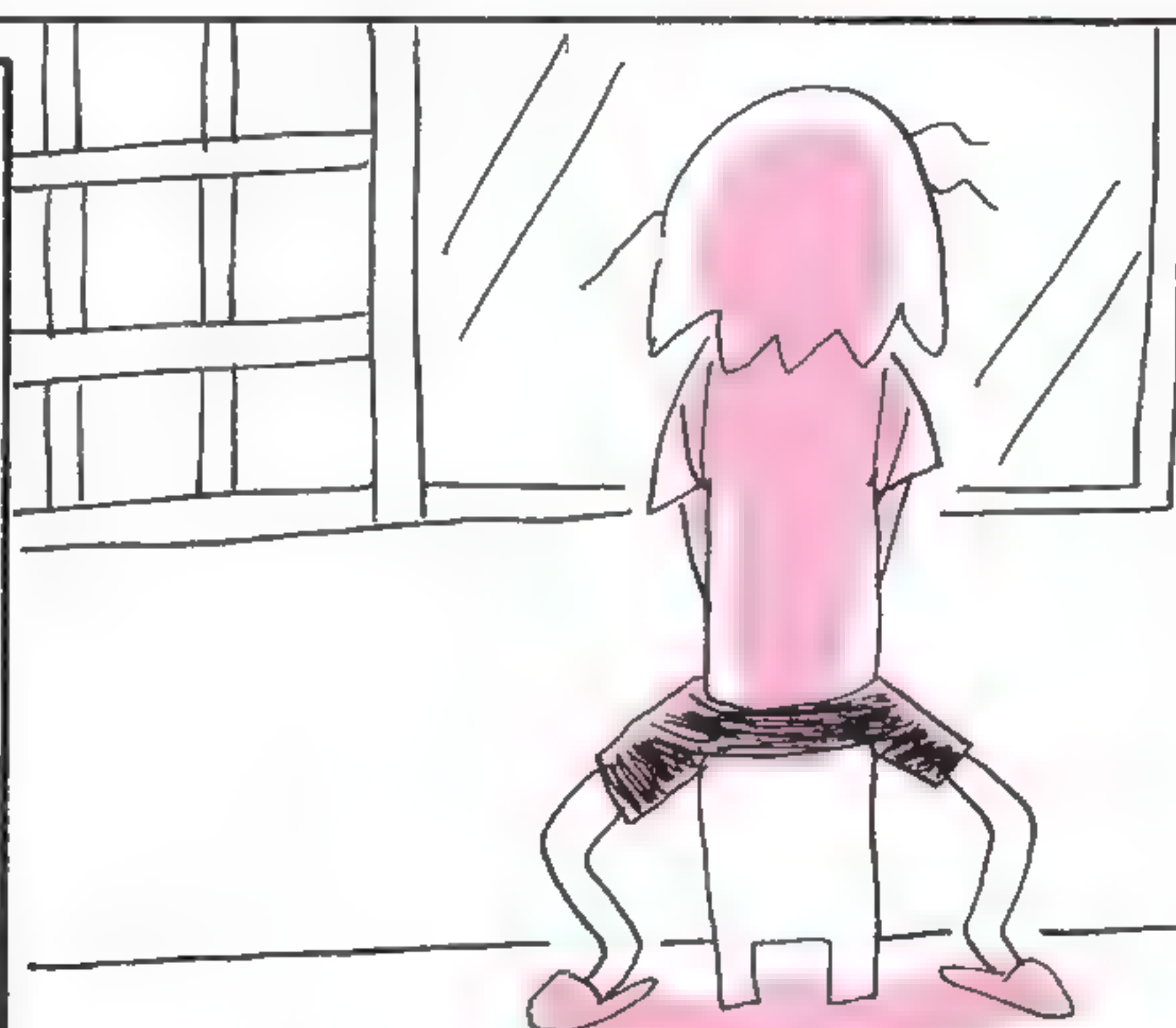
That's
when they
warned me
about over-
hydrating.

- 8/7
- IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, THEY'LL FORCIBLY DISCHARGE ME IF I GET DRUNK. BUT THAT WOULD MAKE MOM SAD.
 - HONESTLY, ALL I'VE DONE SINCE I SAW THAT "SIX MONTHS" NOTE IS CRY.



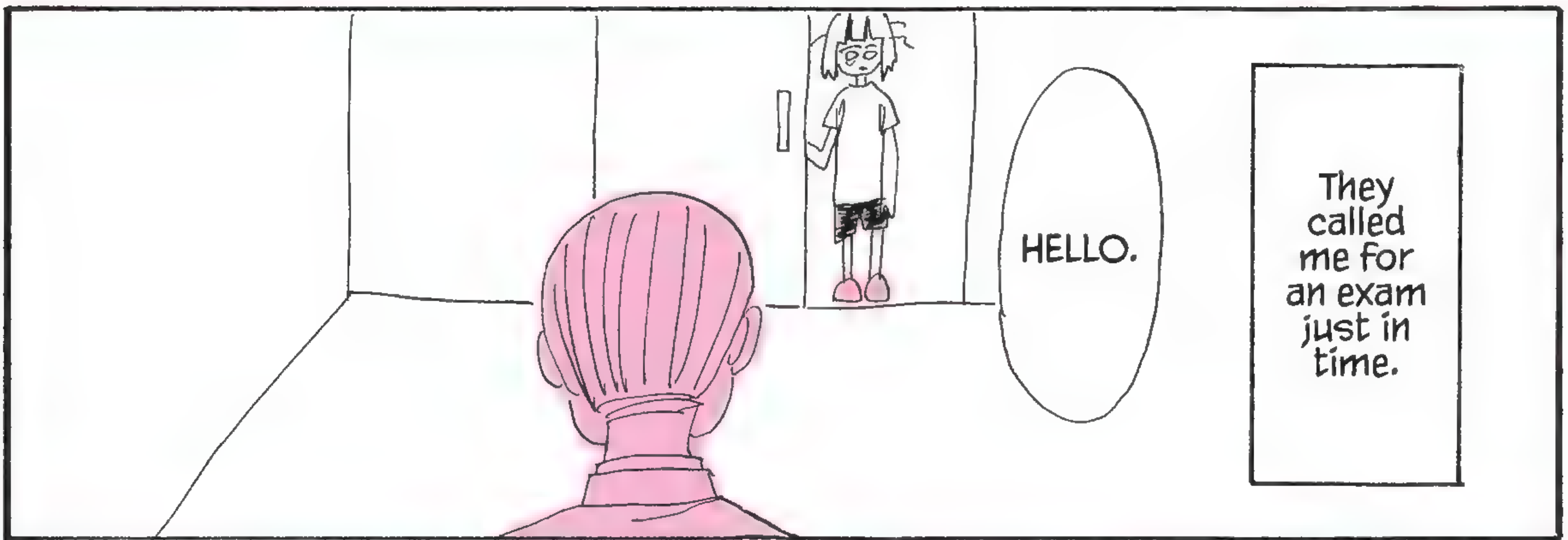
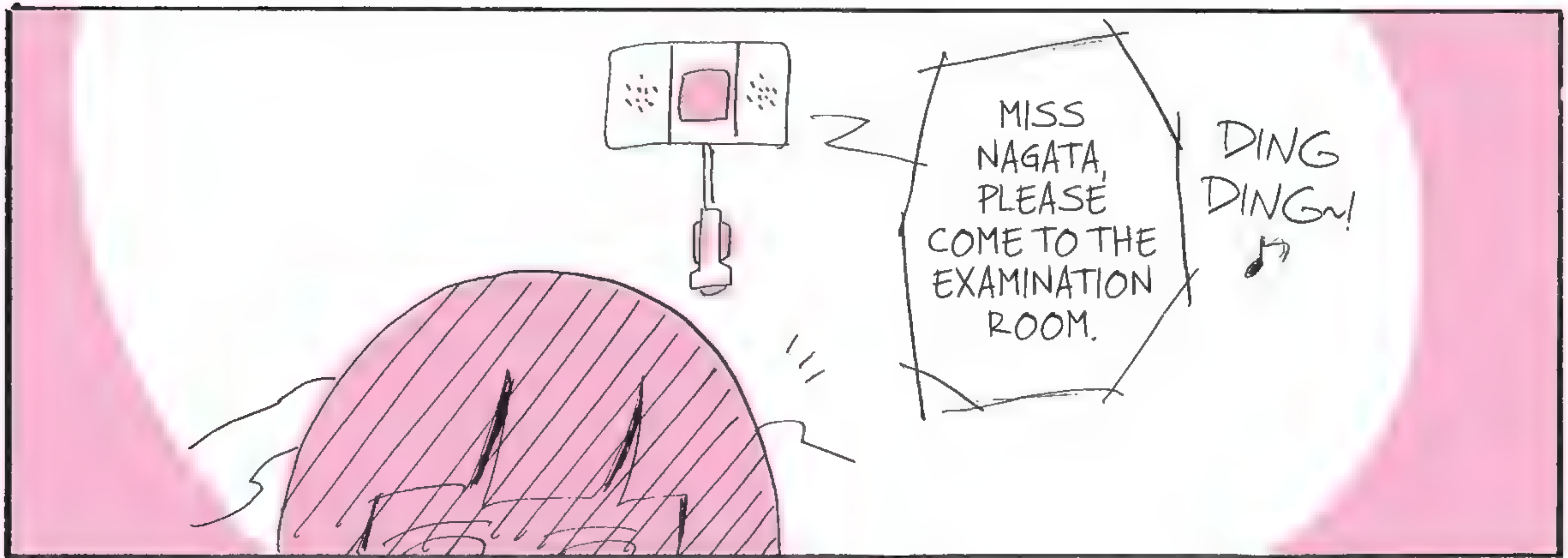
I reminded myself that I could always get drunk and force a discharge. So it was okay. I was scared of them getting mad at me, but it was okay.

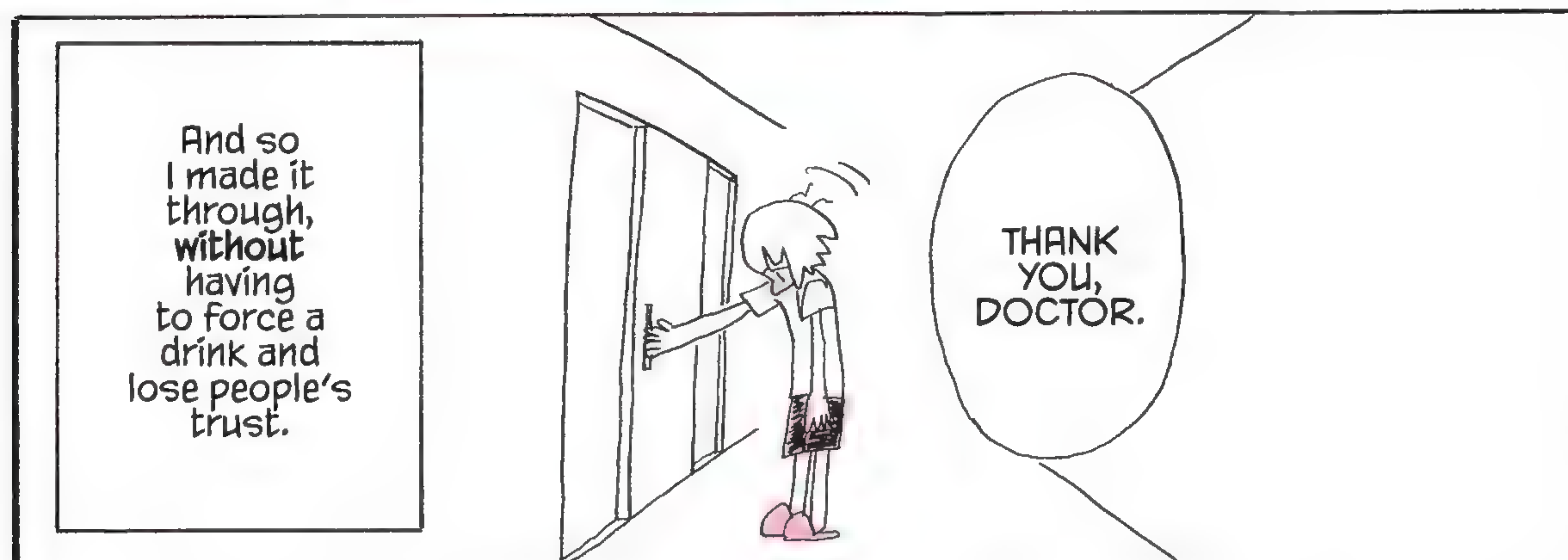
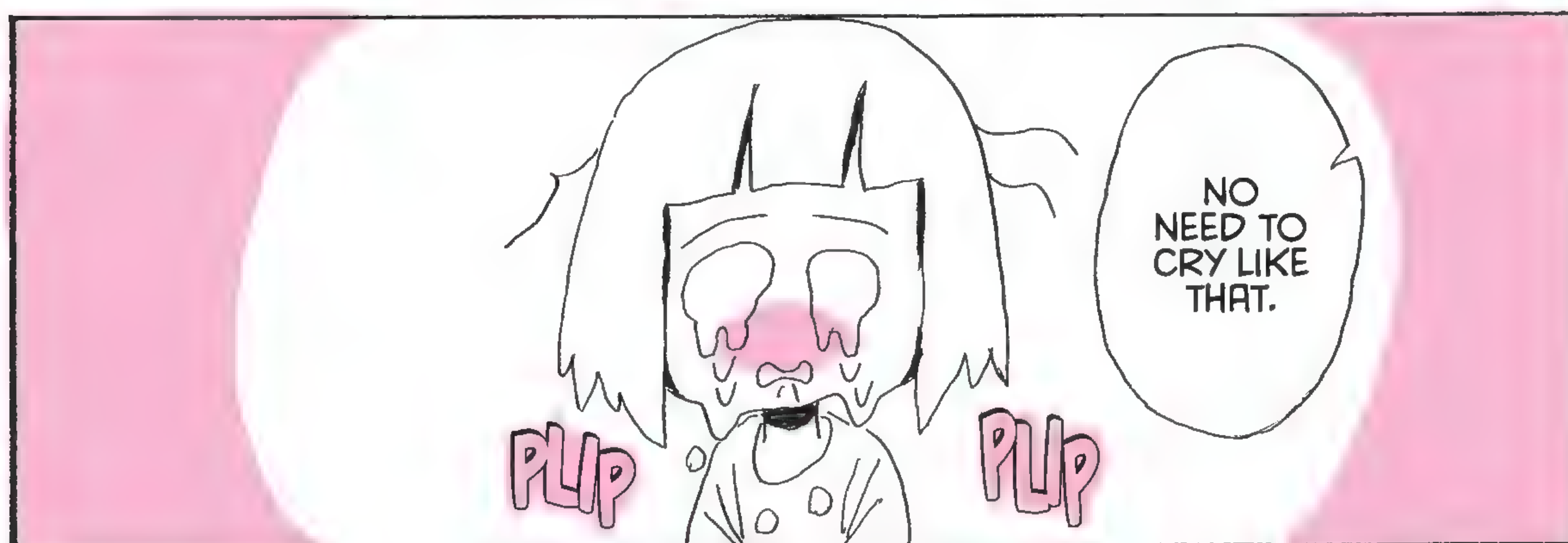
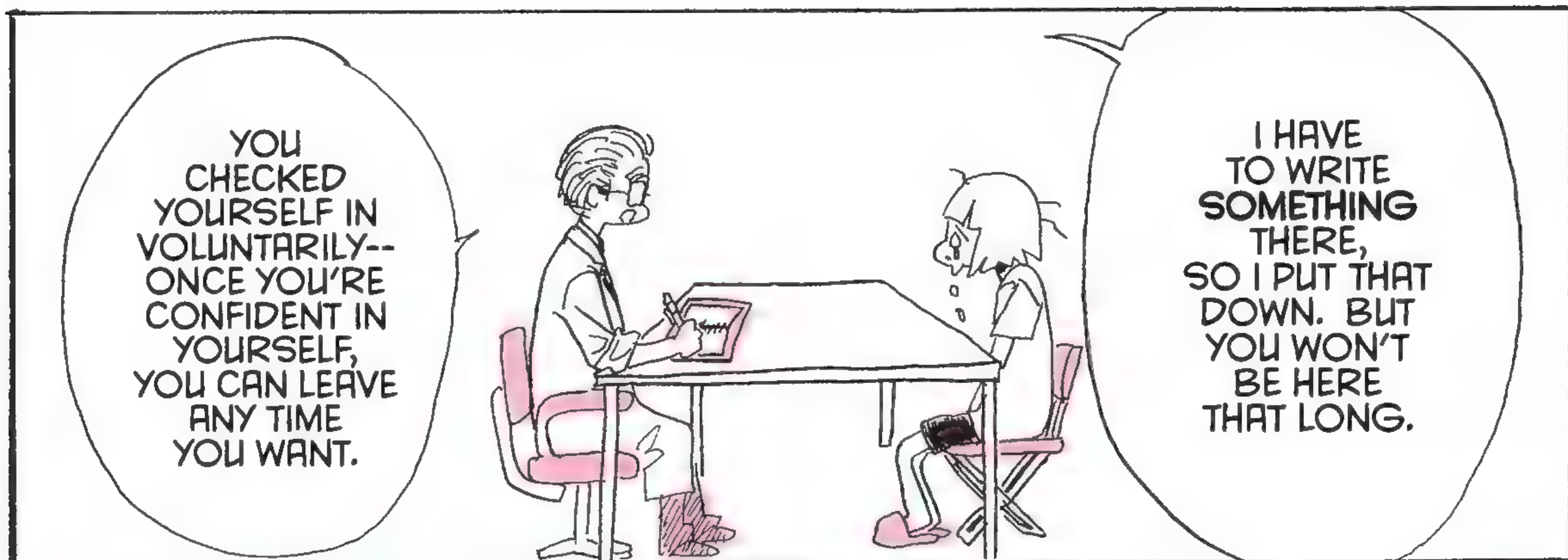
I just sat and watched the cars go by, the "six months" verdict paralyzing me.



I really am lonely. I'm too lonely. I can't stand it anymore.







• BIIIG NEWS: THE "SIX MONTHS" WAS JUST BECAUSE THEY HAD TO WRITE SOMETHING! I CHECKED MYSELF IN, SO I GUESS I CAN LEAVE WHENEVER I WANT!!!!

• I WANNA EMAIL MY FAMILY AND TELL THEM RIGHT AWAY. REC TIME TOMORROW CAN'T COME FAST ENOUGH!

I CAN ONLY TOUCH MY PHONE DURING RECREATION TIME.

8/8

• I WANNA WASH UP TODAY.

• BE STRONG. AT THE NEXT EXAM, I'M GONNA SAY I WANT TO GO HOME.

• DAD WILL BE HERE SOON. I'M SURE I'LL CRY.

They said it made them feel better.

FIRST FLOOR LOBBY.

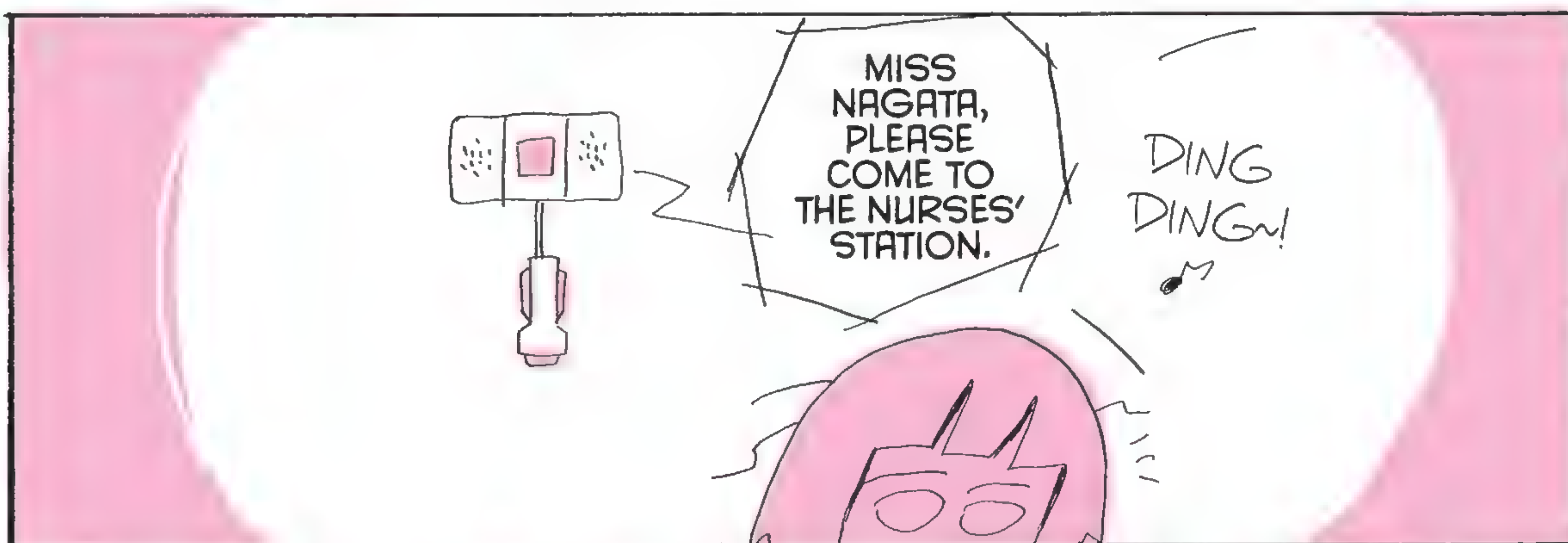


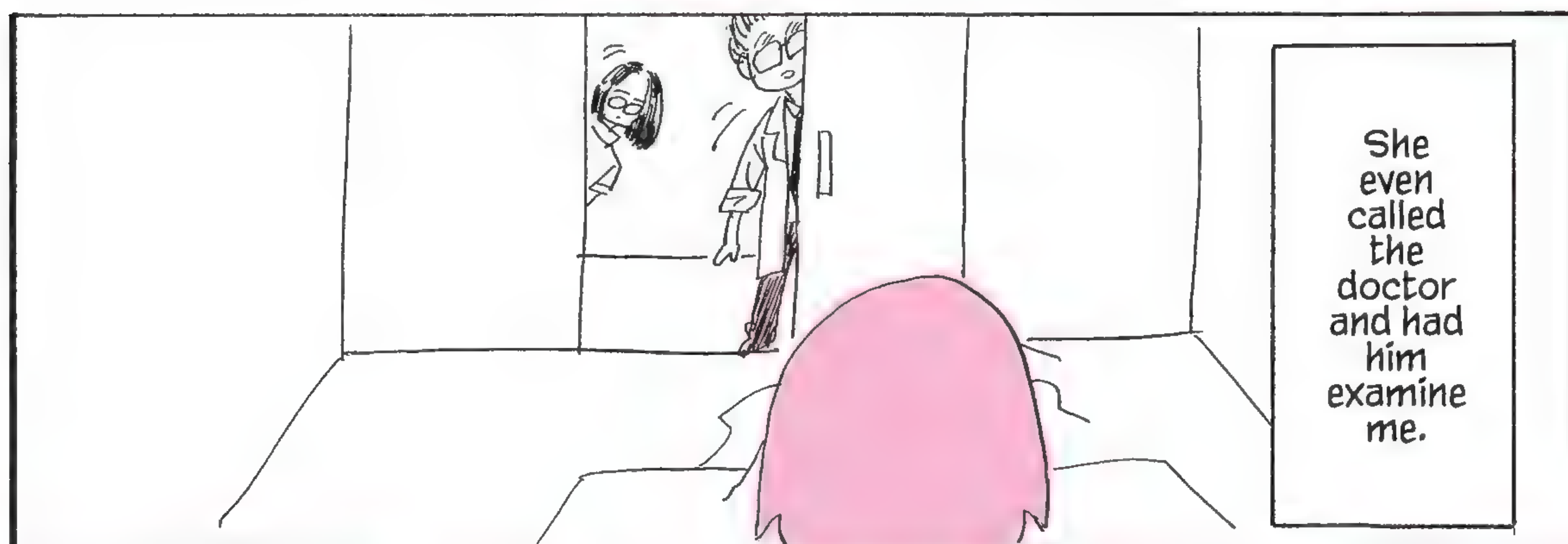
I emailed the biiig news.

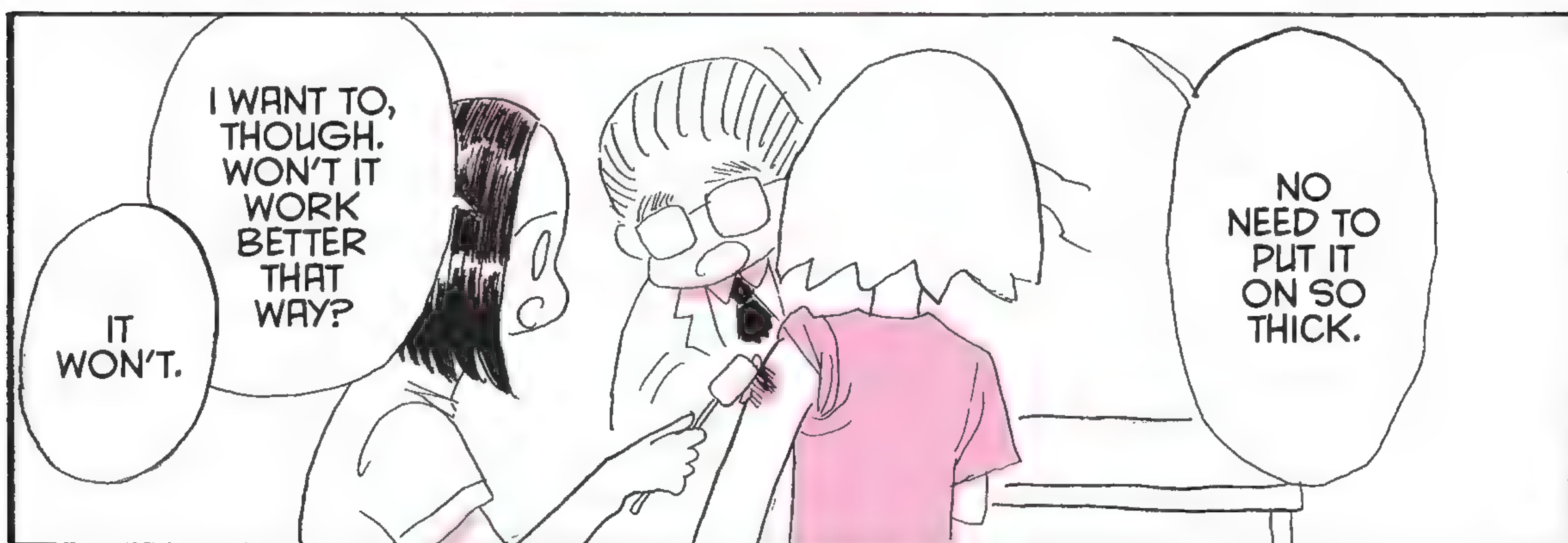
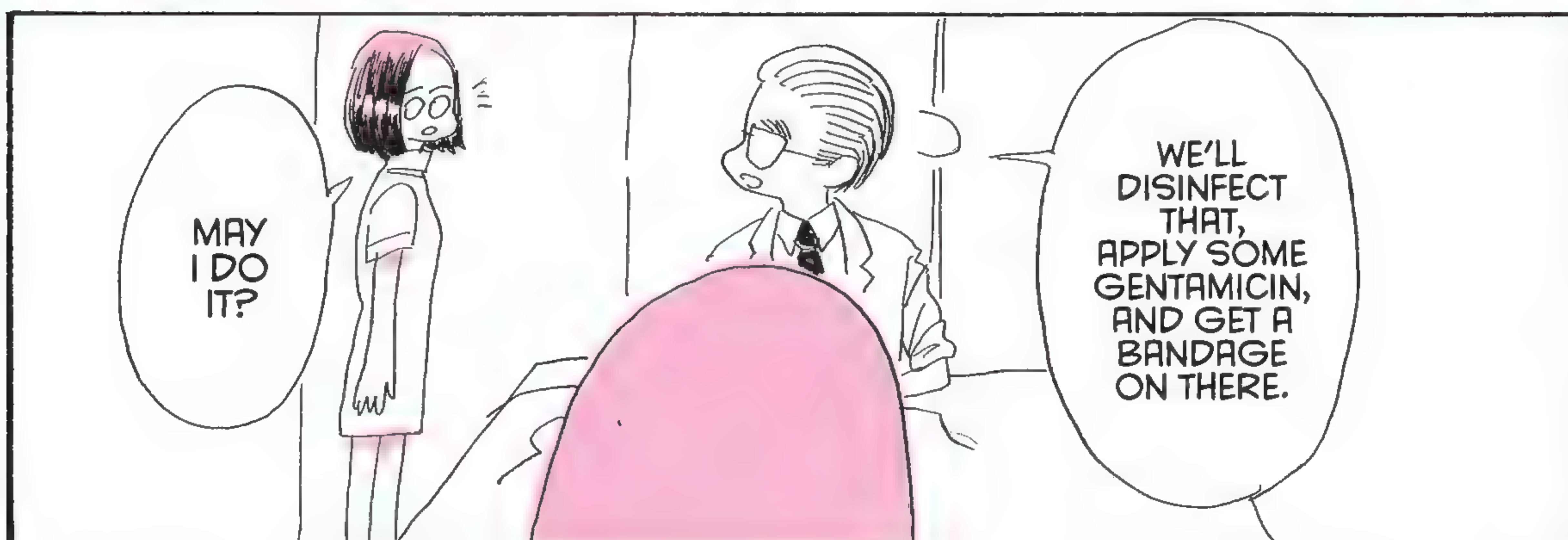
I BROKE DOWN BECAUSE THAT'S HOW MUCH I WANNA GO HOME, HOW I'M SO LONELY THAT I CAN HARDLY STAND IT.



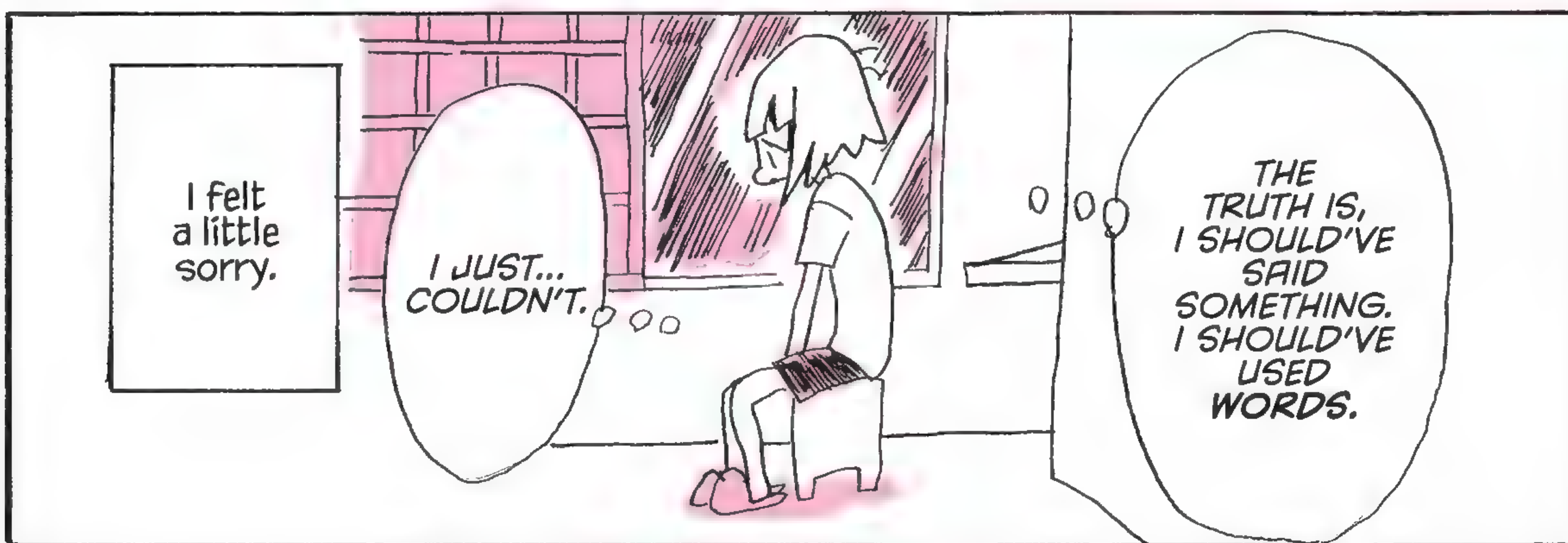
I HAVEN'T BEEN SELF-HARMING LATELY.







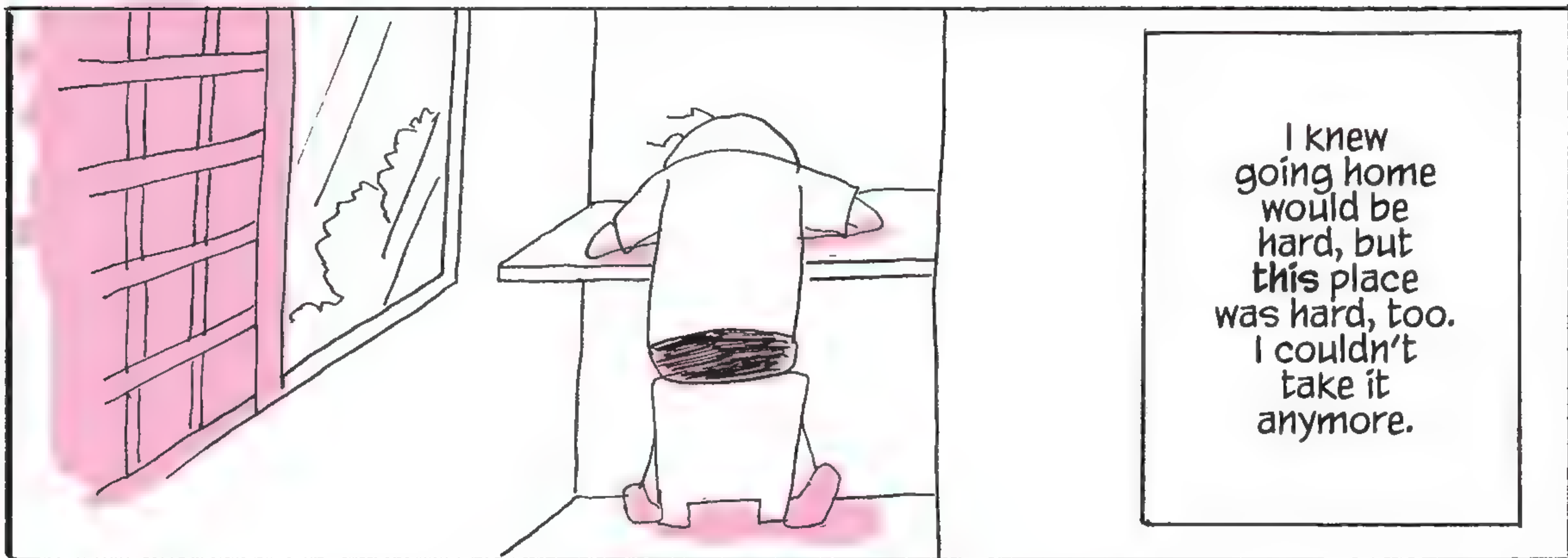
My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2



8/9

- LOOKS LIKE MOM'S COMING TODAY. DAD'S TOMORROW.
- I TOOK A BATH.
- A NURSE SAID TO ME, "YOU'RE ONLY THIRTY--YOU'RE STILL YOUNG. YOU HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THE FUN STUFF."



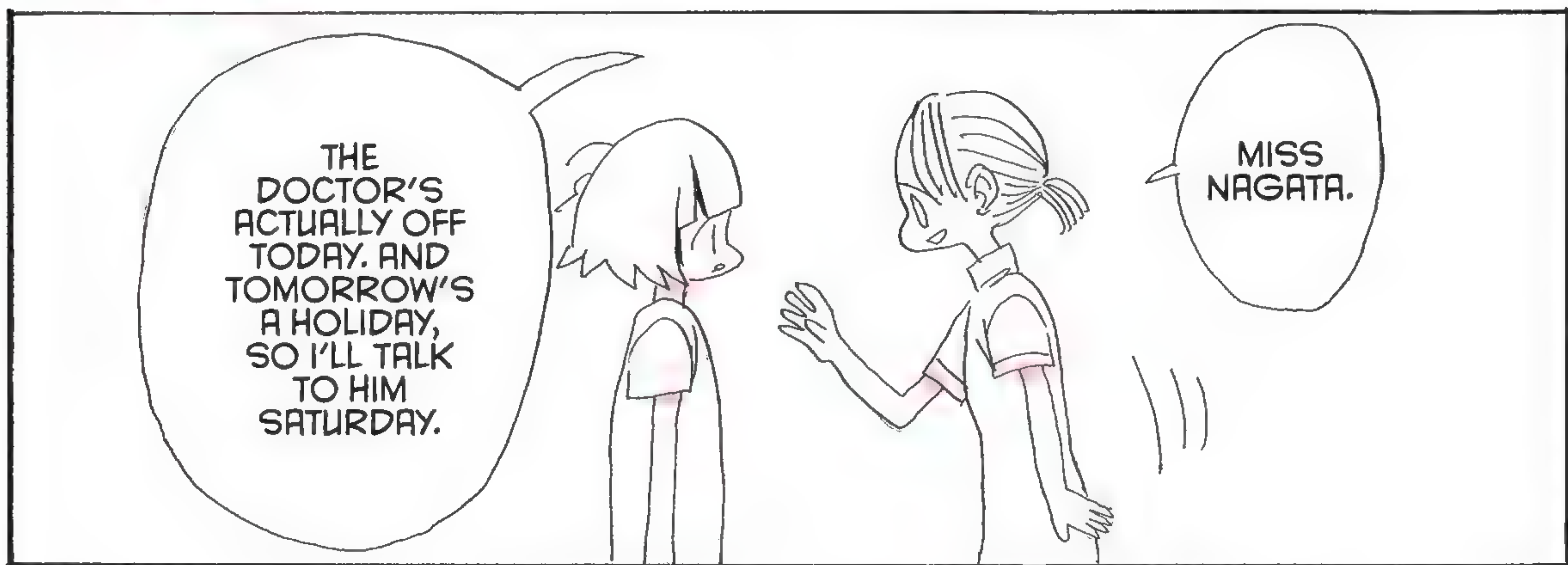
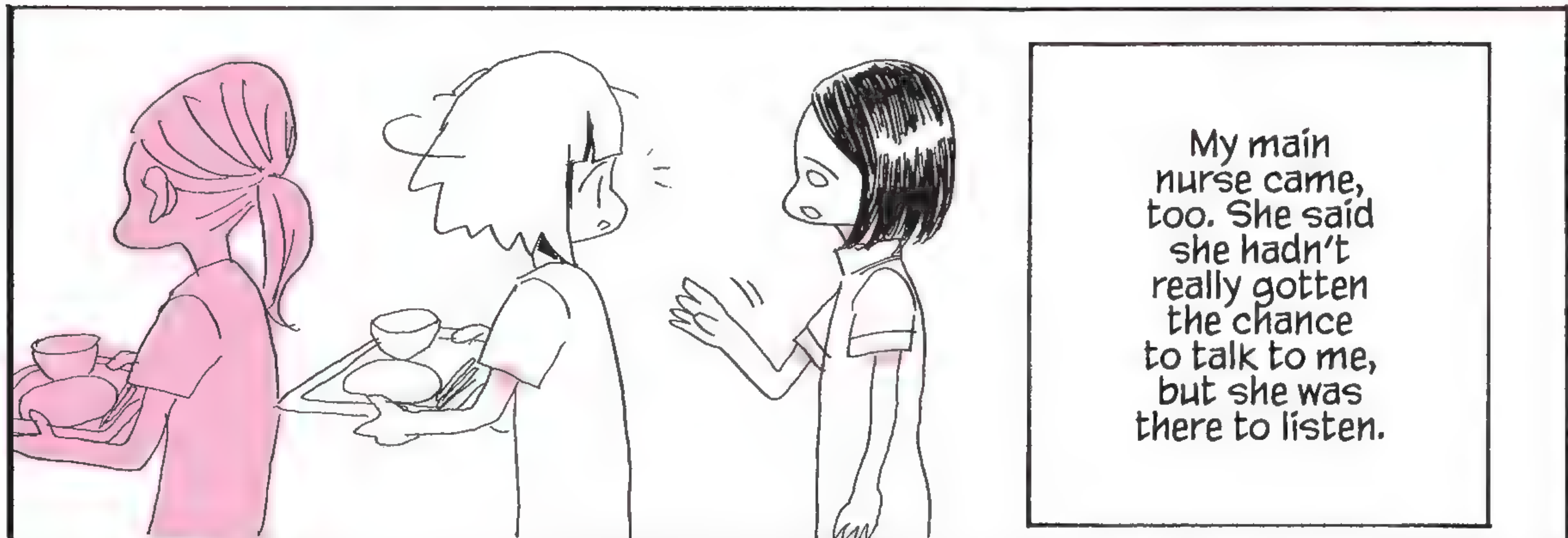
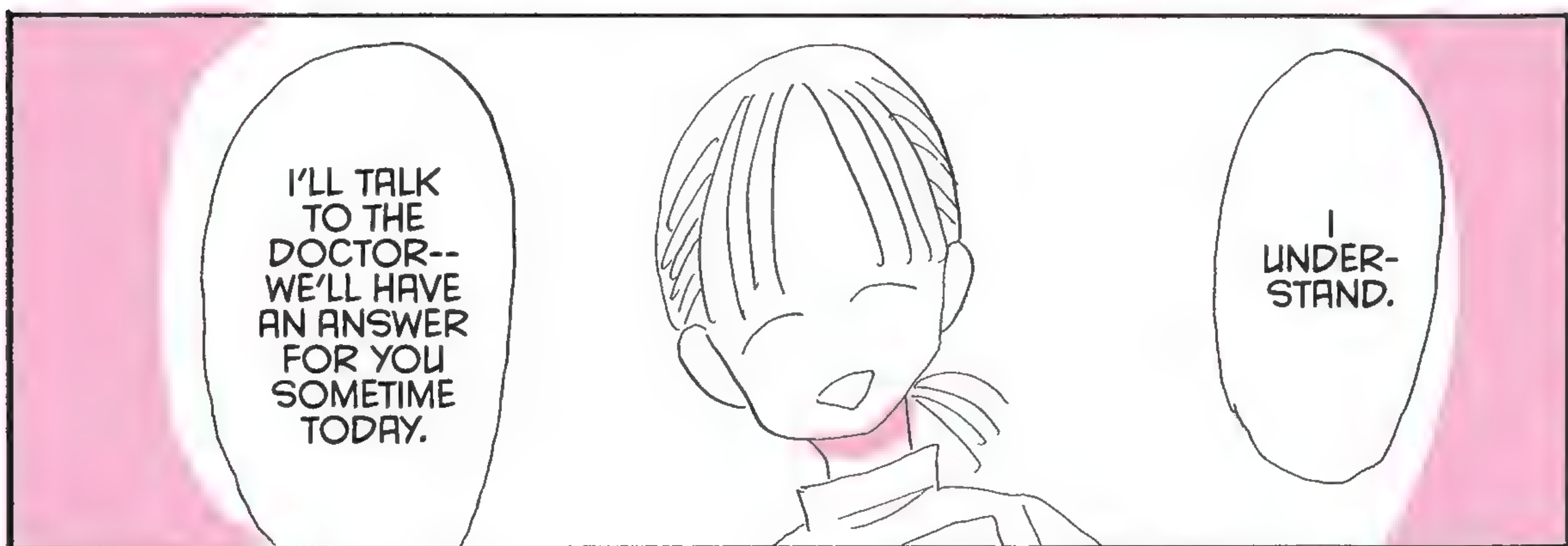
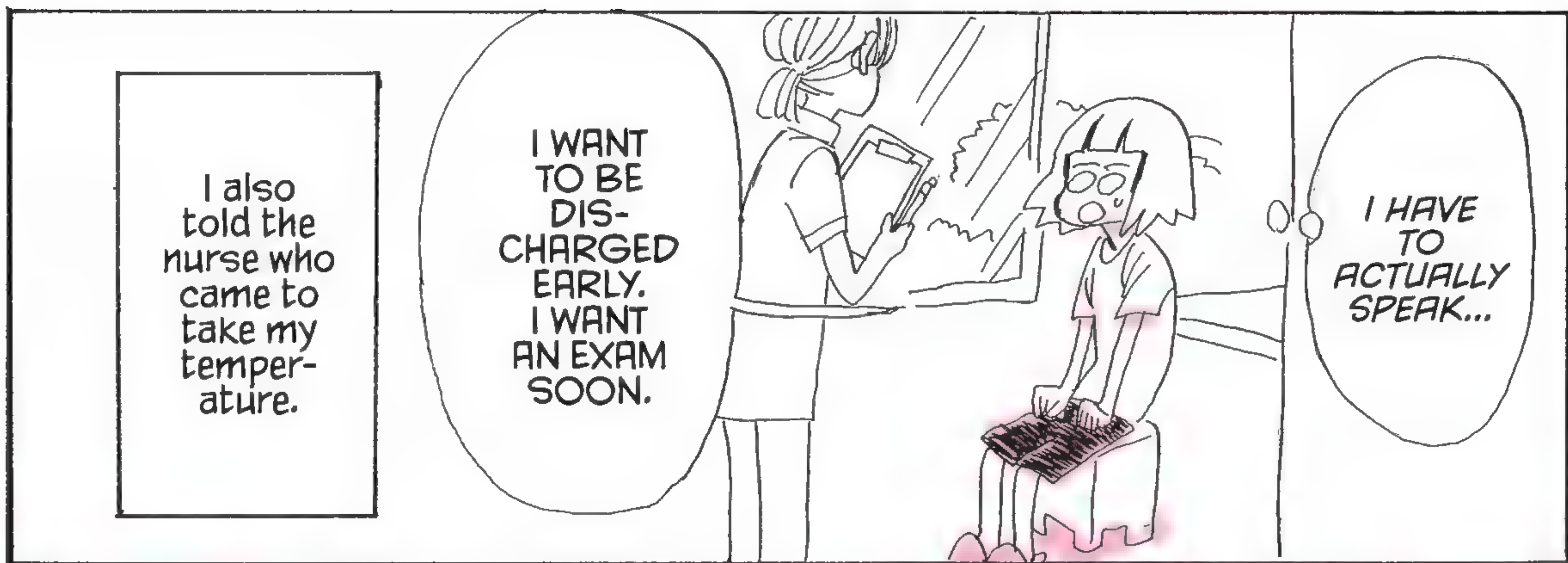


- MOM CAME AND THEN LEFT AT 2:30. I'M SO LONELY, I'M SO LONELY. I CAN'T DO THIS.
- I WANNA GO HOME SO BAD, I CAN'T STAND IT.
- I MIGHT HAVE AN EXAM TODAY. → I DIDN'T.
- I'VE FOUGHT HARD ENOUGH ALREADY.

8/10 • MOM POINTED OUT IN AN EMAIL THAT WHEN I WAS LIVING BY MYSELF, I WAS A NUISANCE TO MY NEIGHBORS, TOO-- SINCE I TALKED LOUDLY TO MYSELF AND CRIED. SHE'S RIGHT...

THAT'S RIGHT, I WAS...



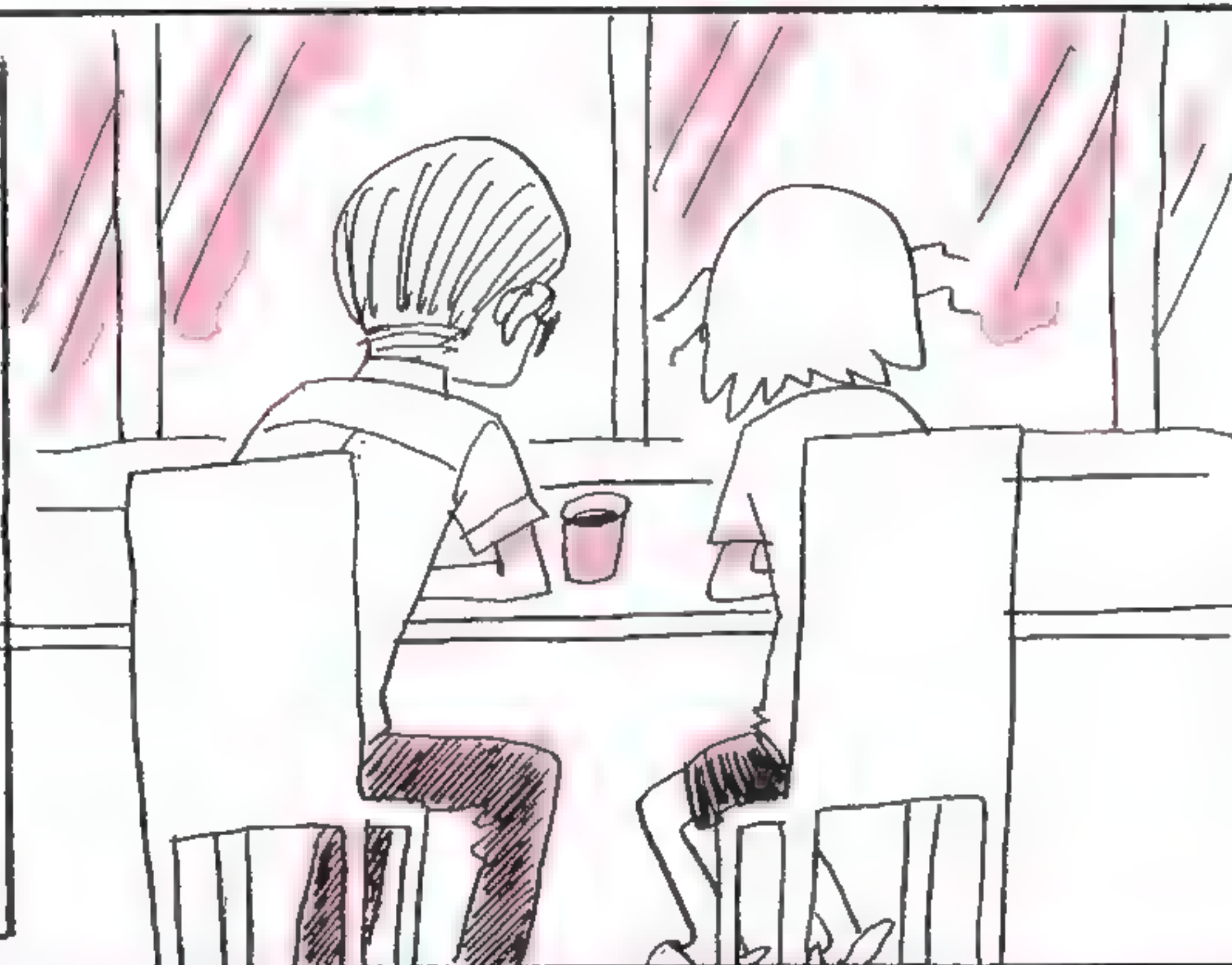


For some reason, the people in the rooms next to me were active in the evening and into the night.



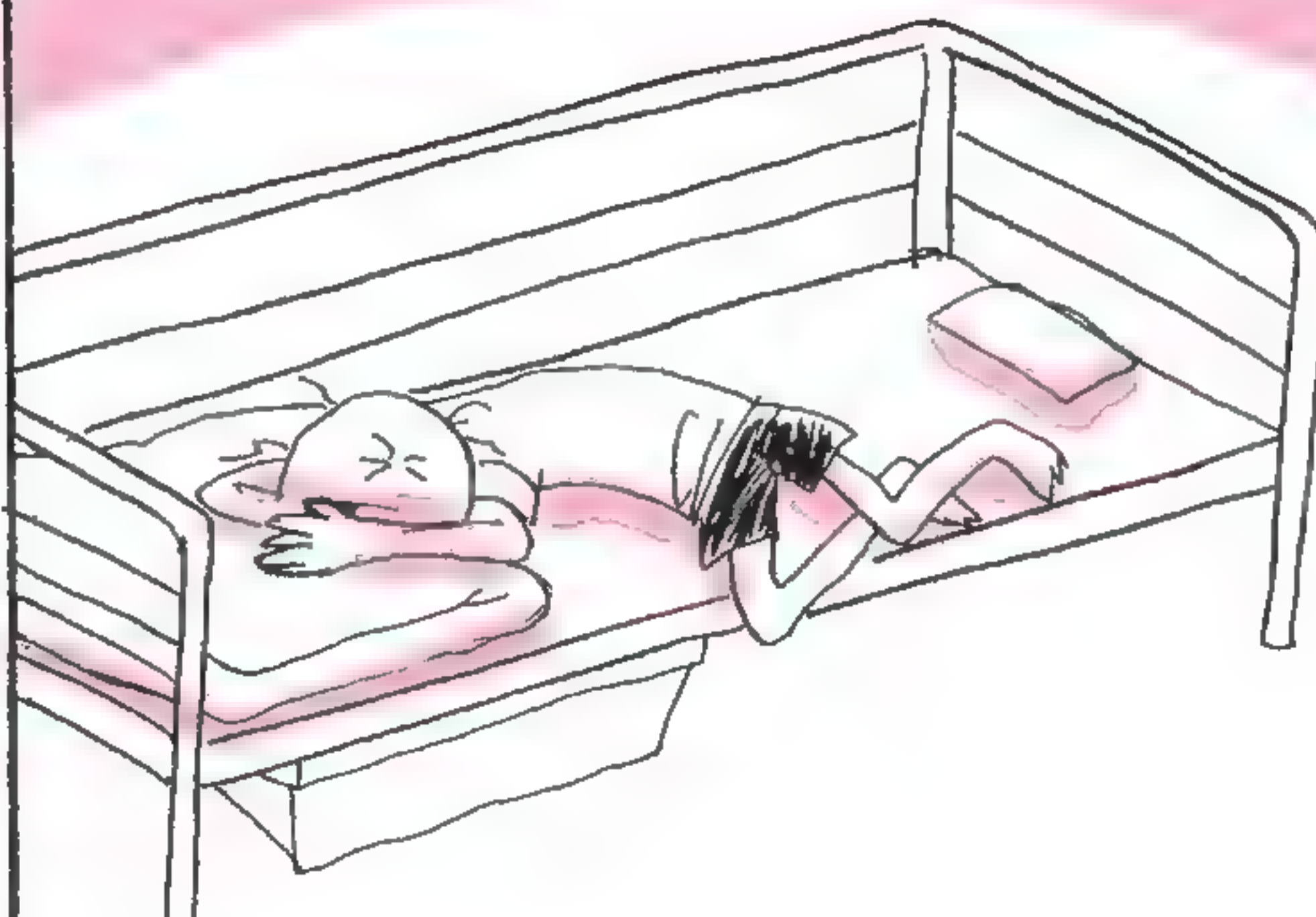
THE AFTER-NOON'S SO QUIET... IT'S NICE.

He shrank my "I can't do this" time for that day. I was grateful for it.



My dad came at one in the afternoon and stayed past five.

I wanna go home now. To my kind dad and my kind mom.

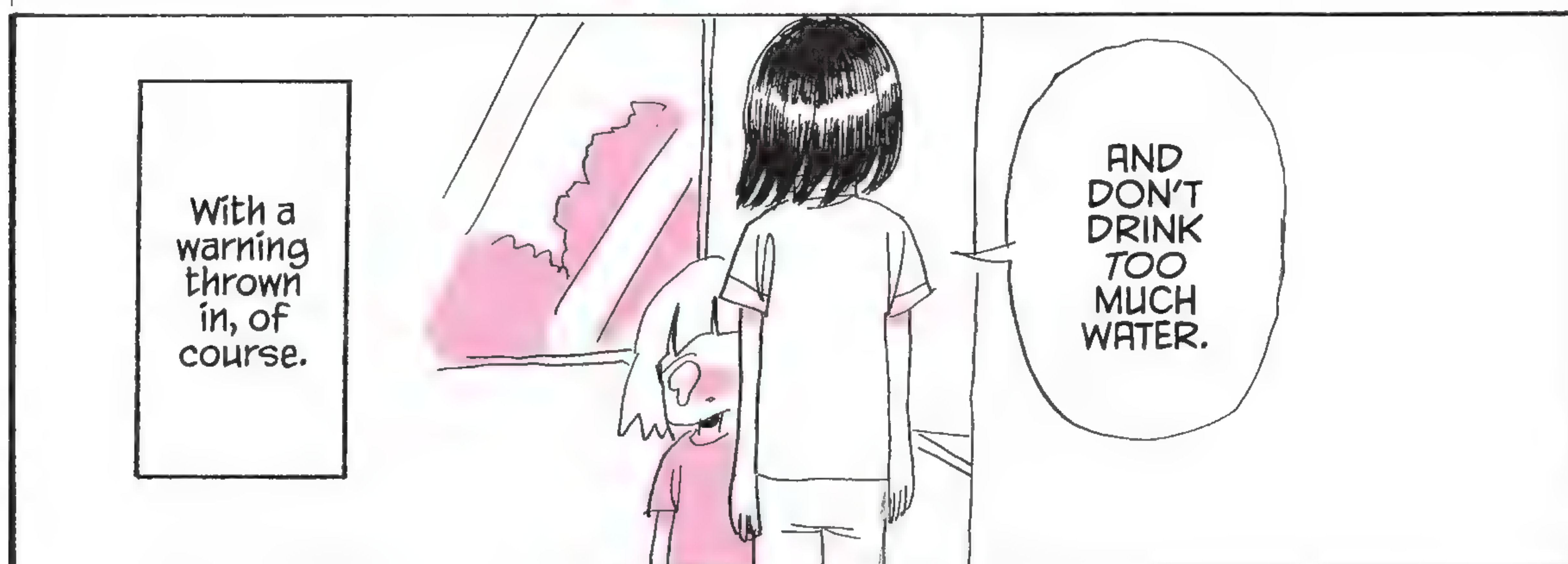
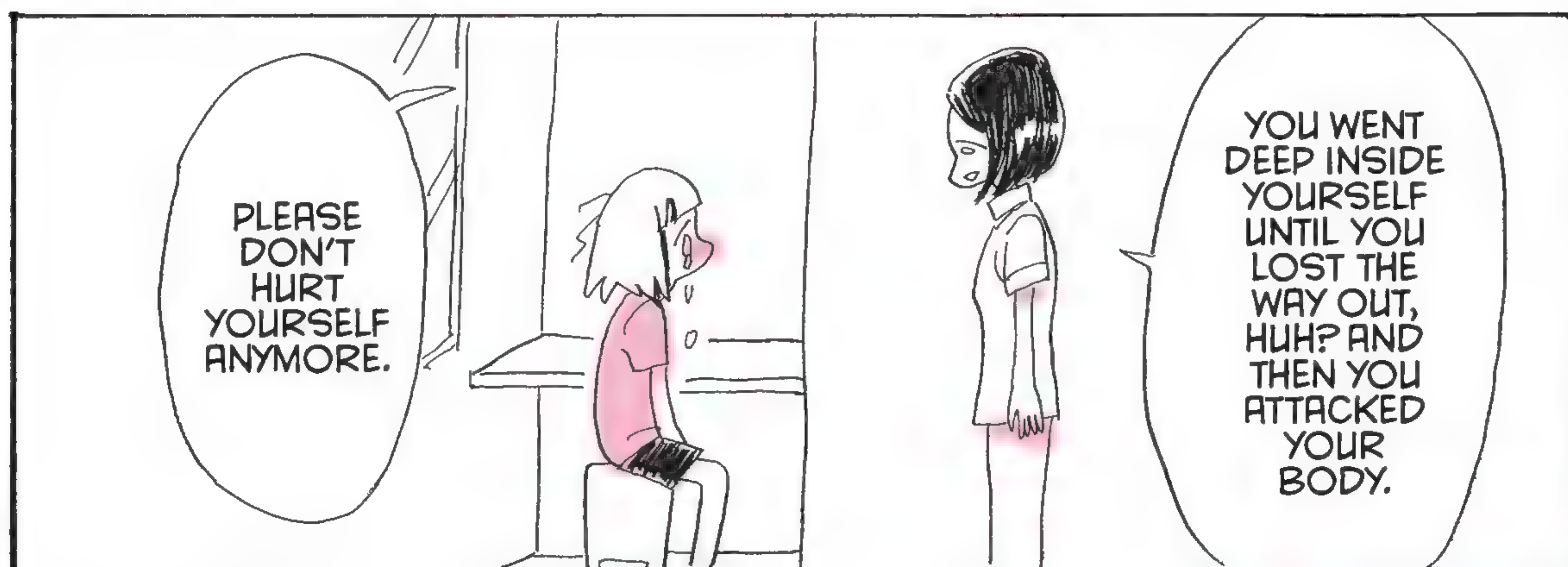


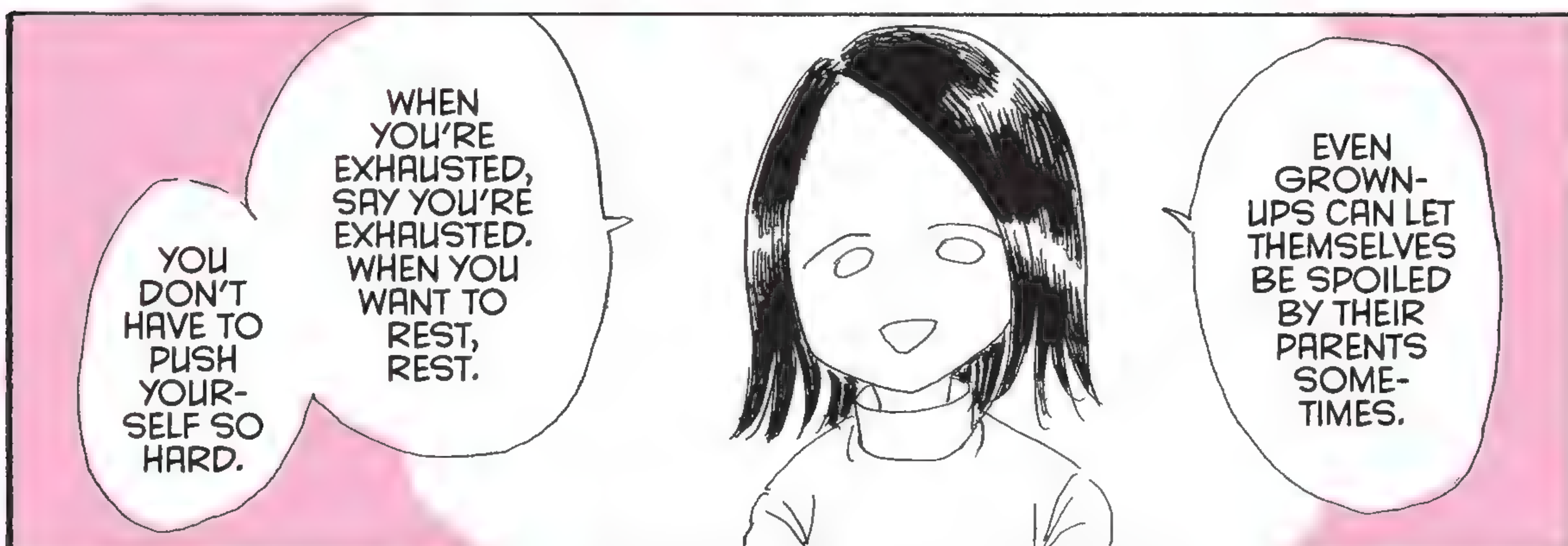
Everyone told me, "That's great," and "He's so nice." Mom was lined up to come the next day.

8/11

- TOMORROW, TOMORROW. I'M GONNA ASK THEM TO PLEASE LET ME LEAVE TOMORROW.
- BATH TODAY.
- MOM'S COMING. SHE CAN STAY A LITTLE LATER THAN USUAL.
- DIDN'T END UP TALKING WITH MY MAIN NURSE YESTERDAY.



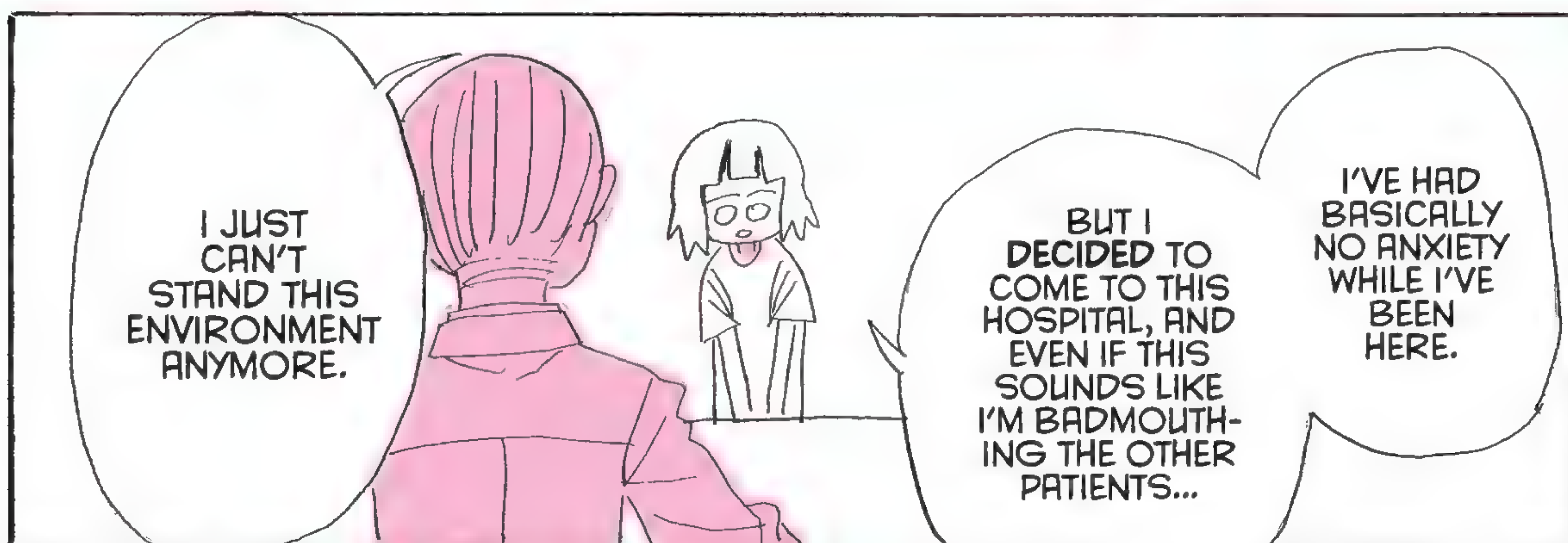
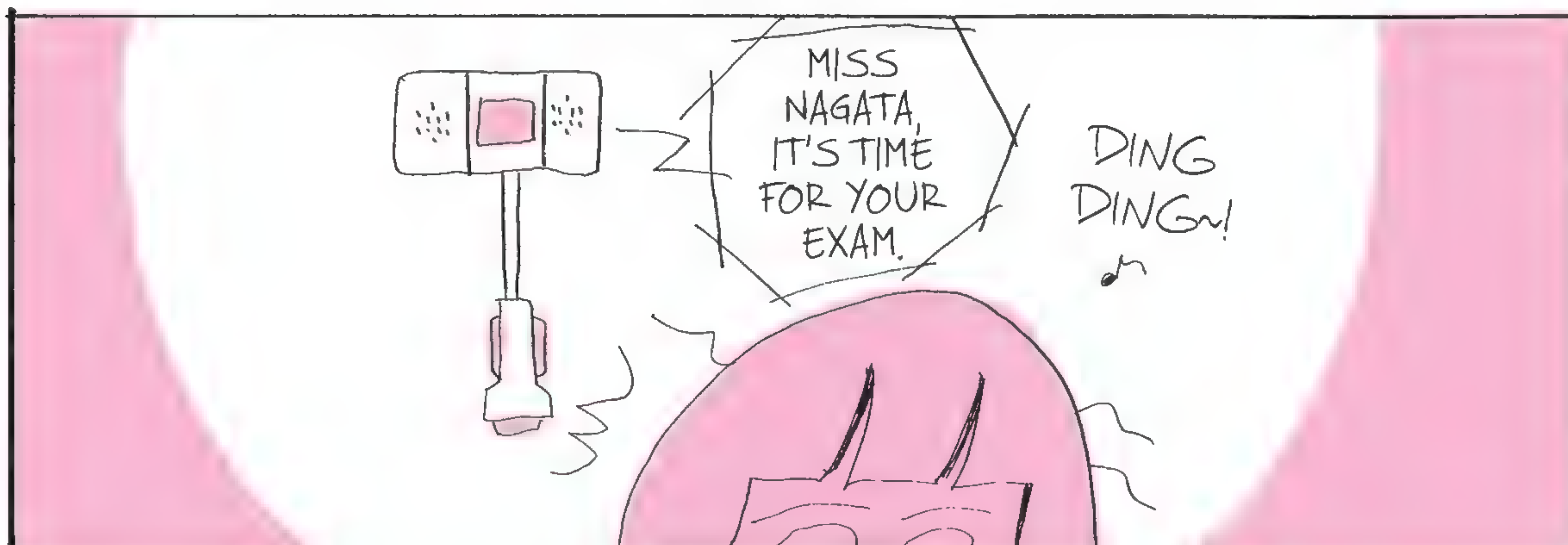


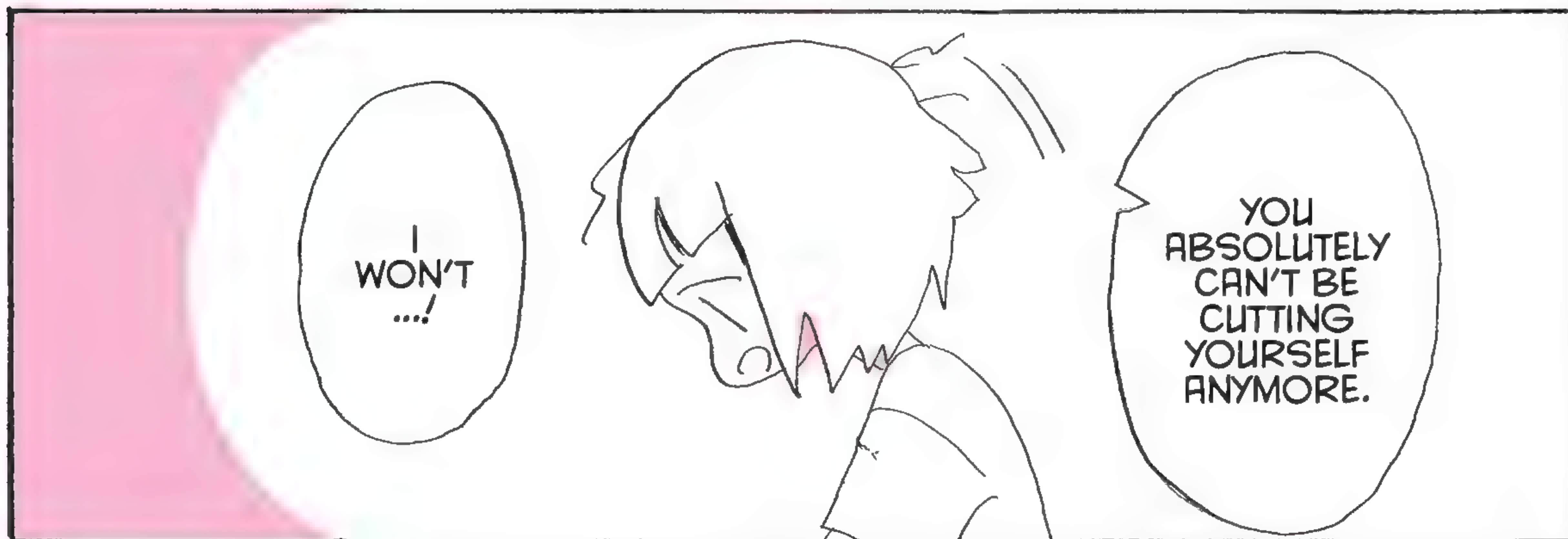
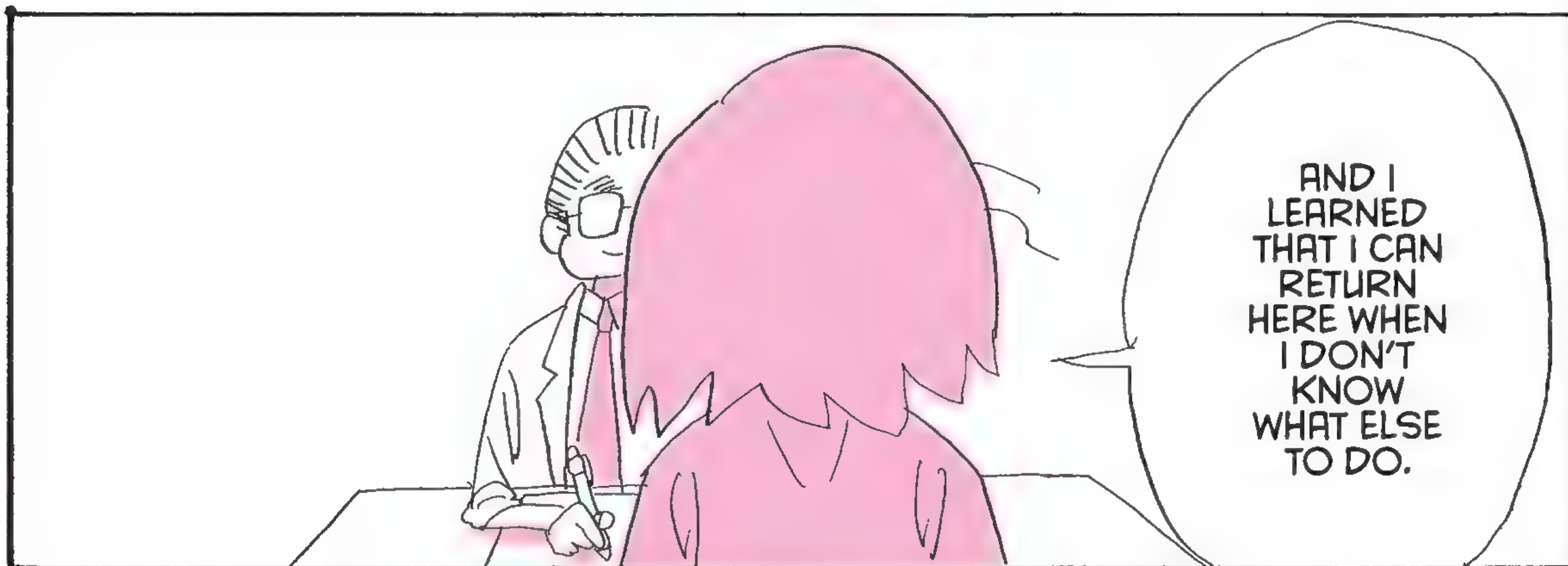


8/12 • IT'S TODAY, IT'S TODAY. TODAY'S EXAM.

• I'VE BEEN HERE TEN DAYS. I'VE DONE MY BEST.

• MESSAGE FROM MOM. SHE CAN'T COME GET ME TODAY, SO I GUESS SHE'LL COME TOMORROW MORNING!



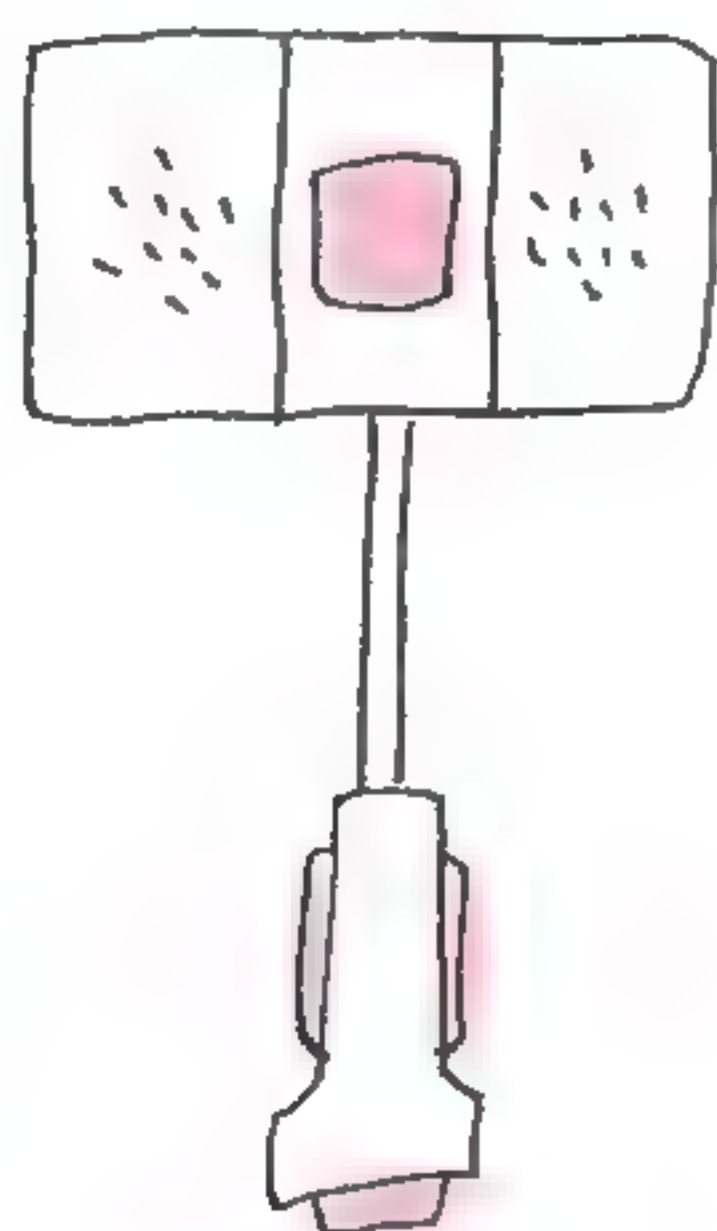


- 8/13
- TODAY'S MY RELEASE DAY!!!!
 - I'VE BEEN HERE ELEVEN DAYS.
 - WHEN I GET HOME, I'M PLOTTING OUT SOME STUFF. BASED ON THIS JOURNAL.

I emailed,
you called,
I was admonished,
the main nurse
was really
understanding
and said
so many
good things.
A lot of stuff
happened,
huh?

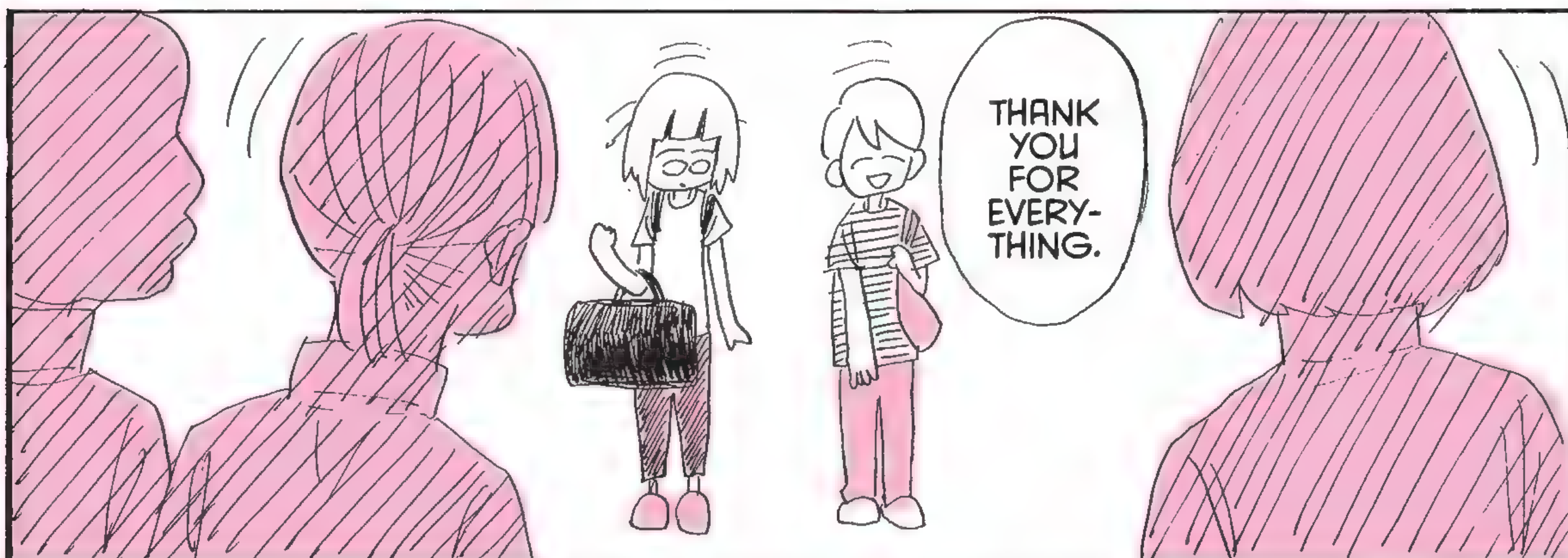
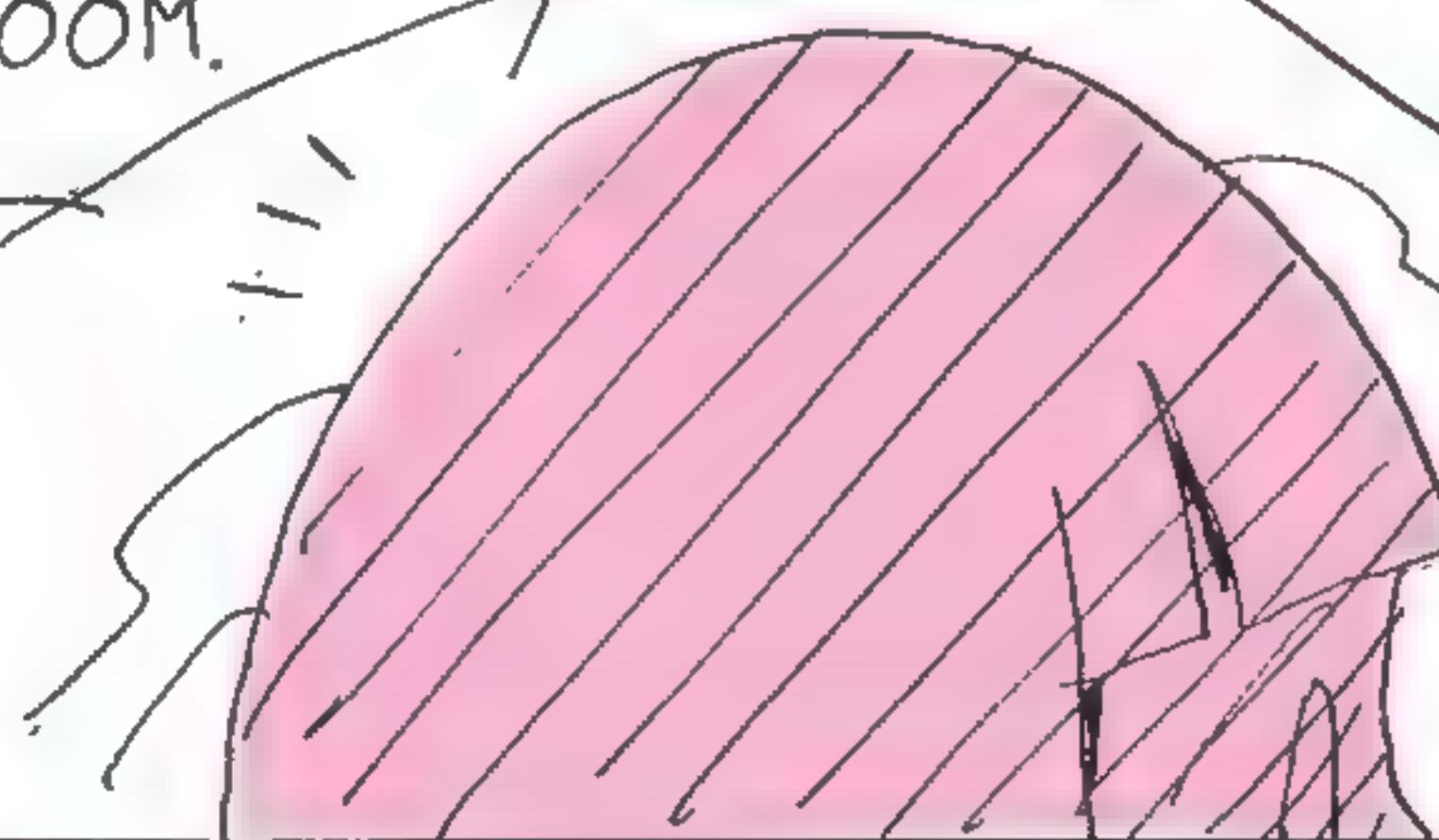


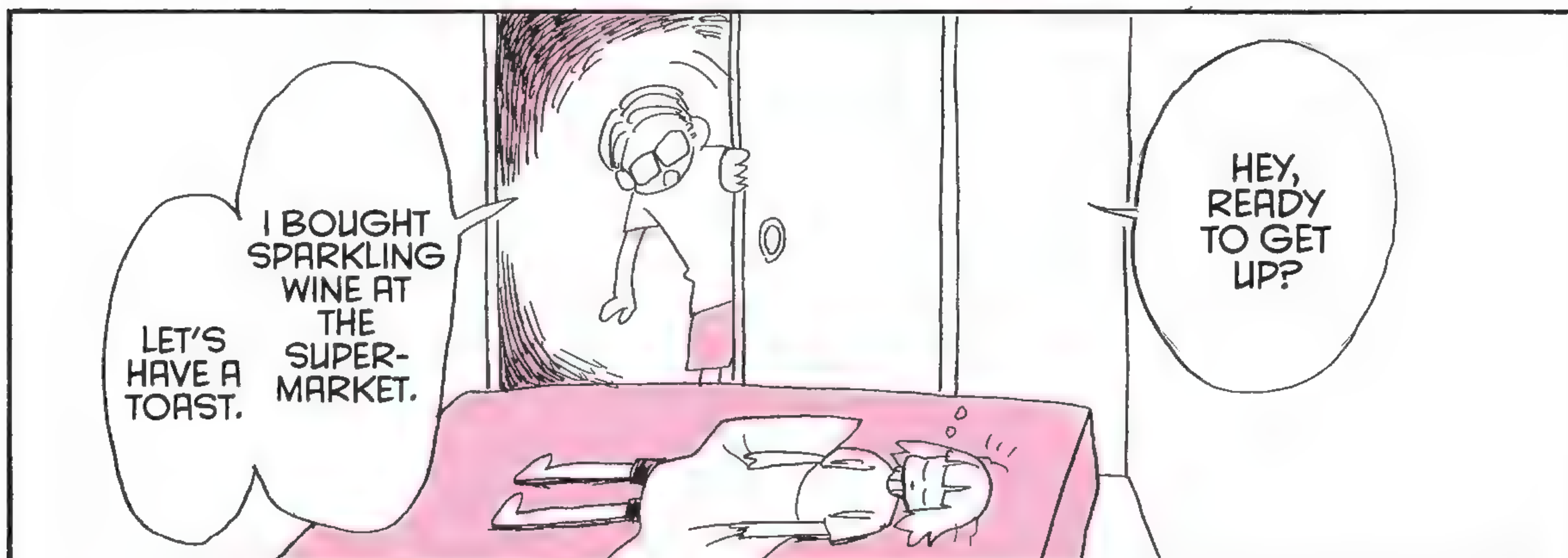
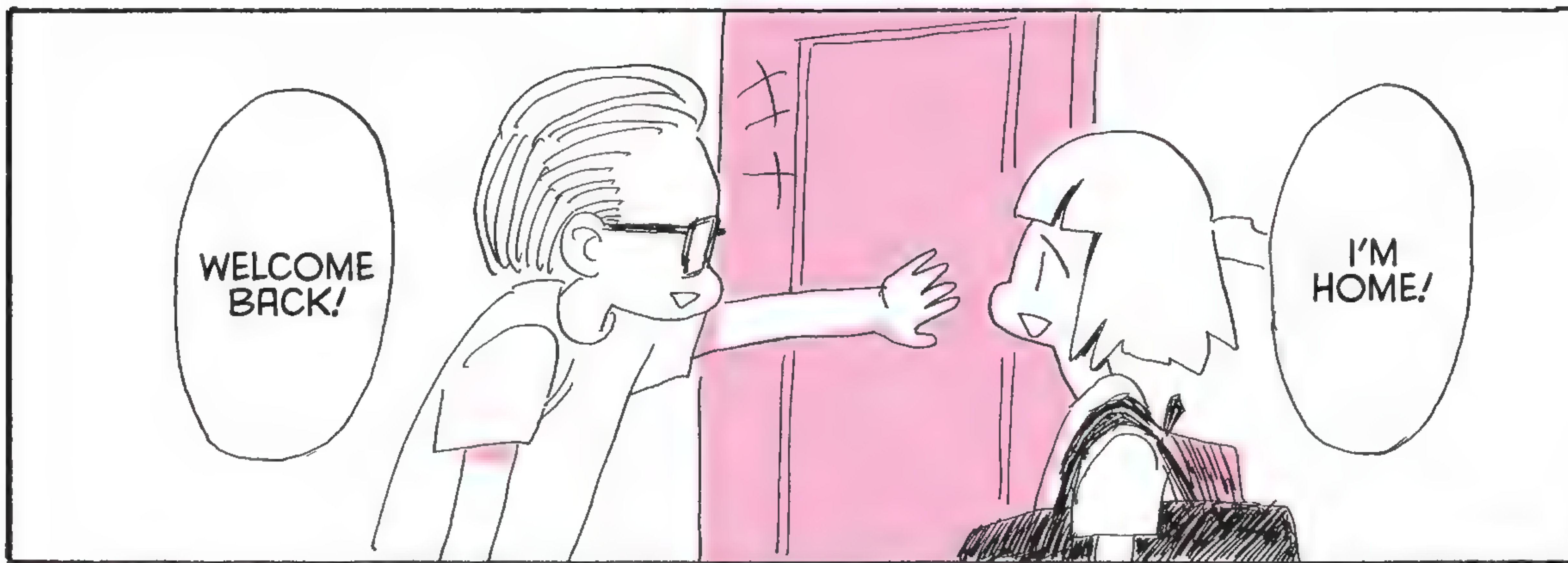
I waited the
whole time.
I also hurt myself
during the "bring
a bag and come
get me" thing.
The six-month
diagnosis made
me cry and
hurt myself.



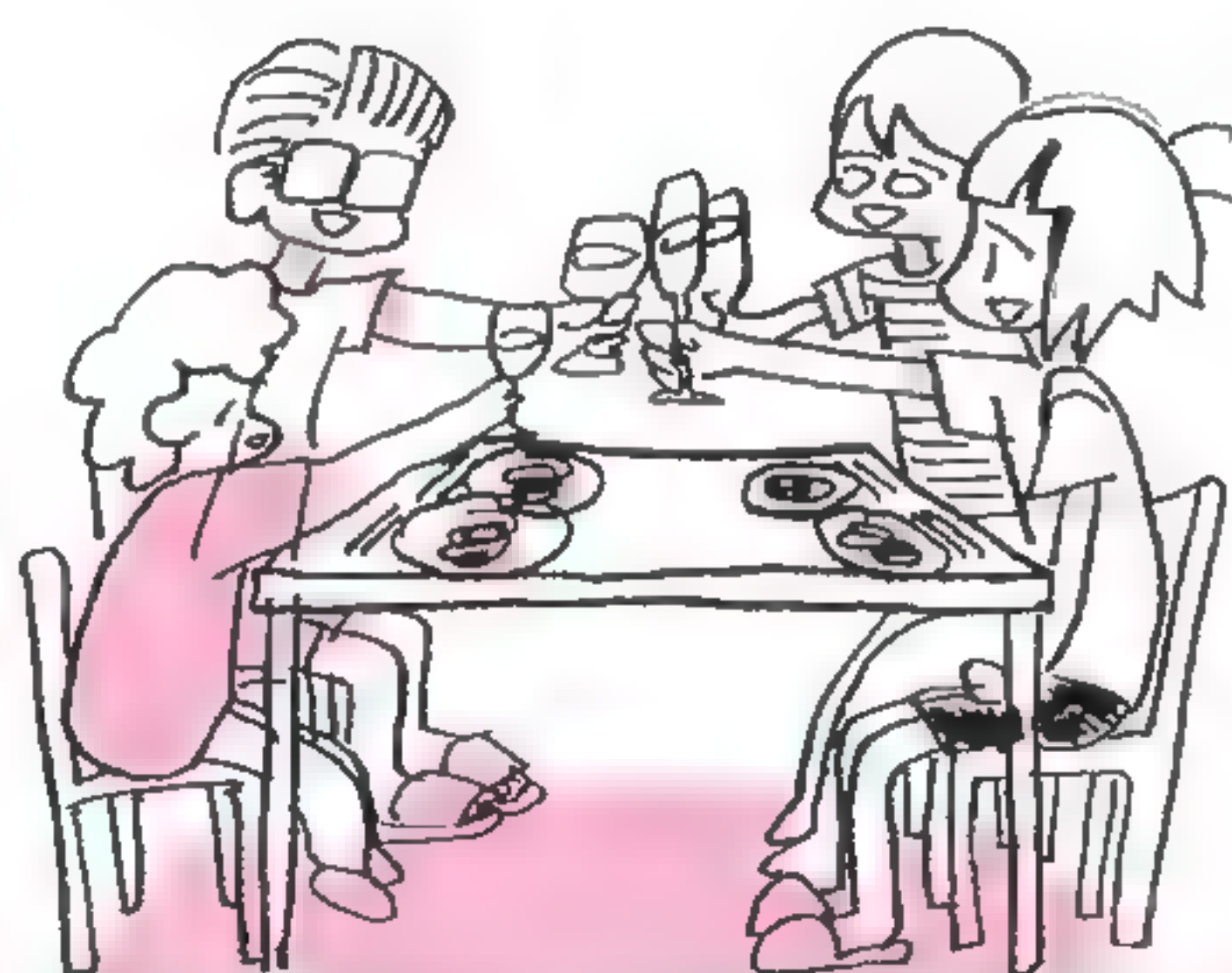
MISS NAGATA,
YOUR MOTHER IS
HERE TO PICK YOU
UP. PLEASE COME
TO THE VISITORS'
ROOM.

DING
DING~
♪





Doctor,
nurses,
and my
family.



CHEERS
~!

OKAY.

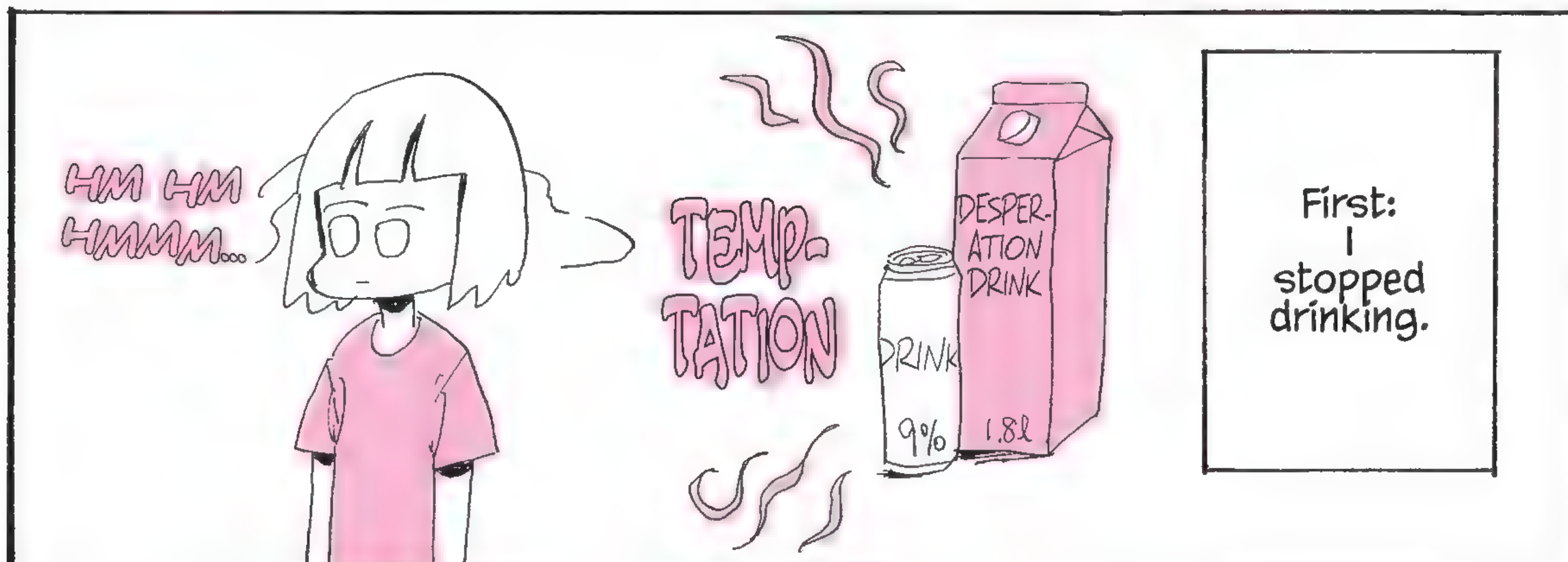
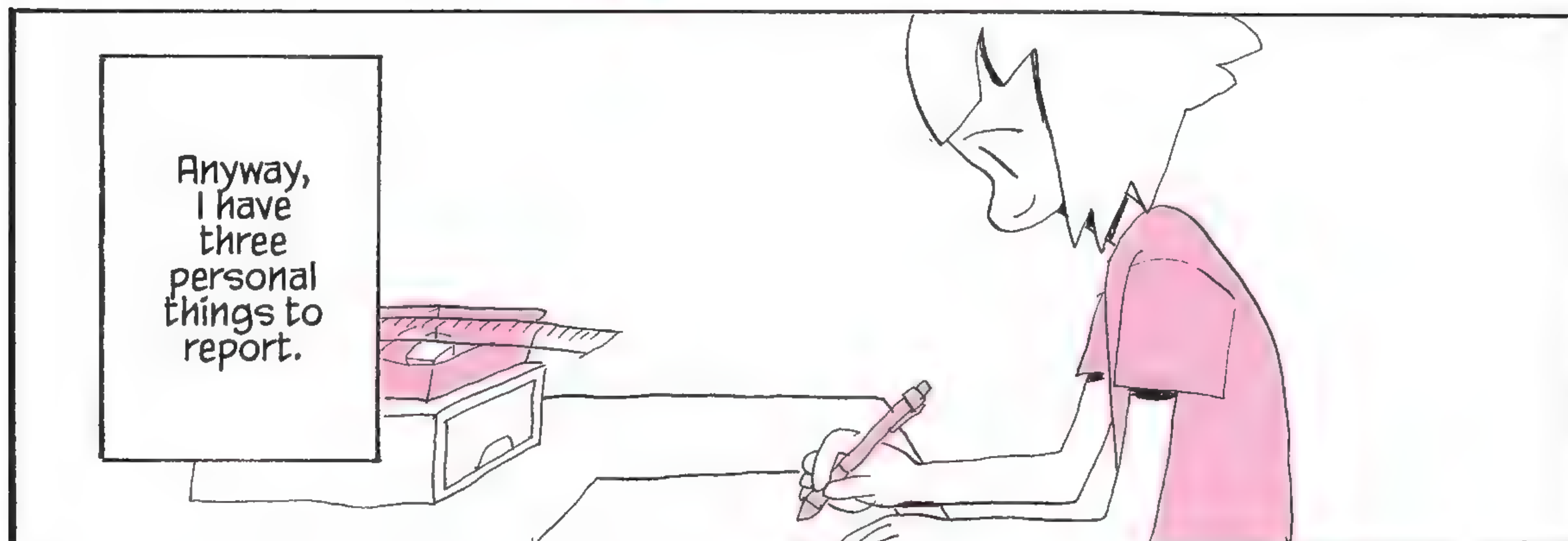
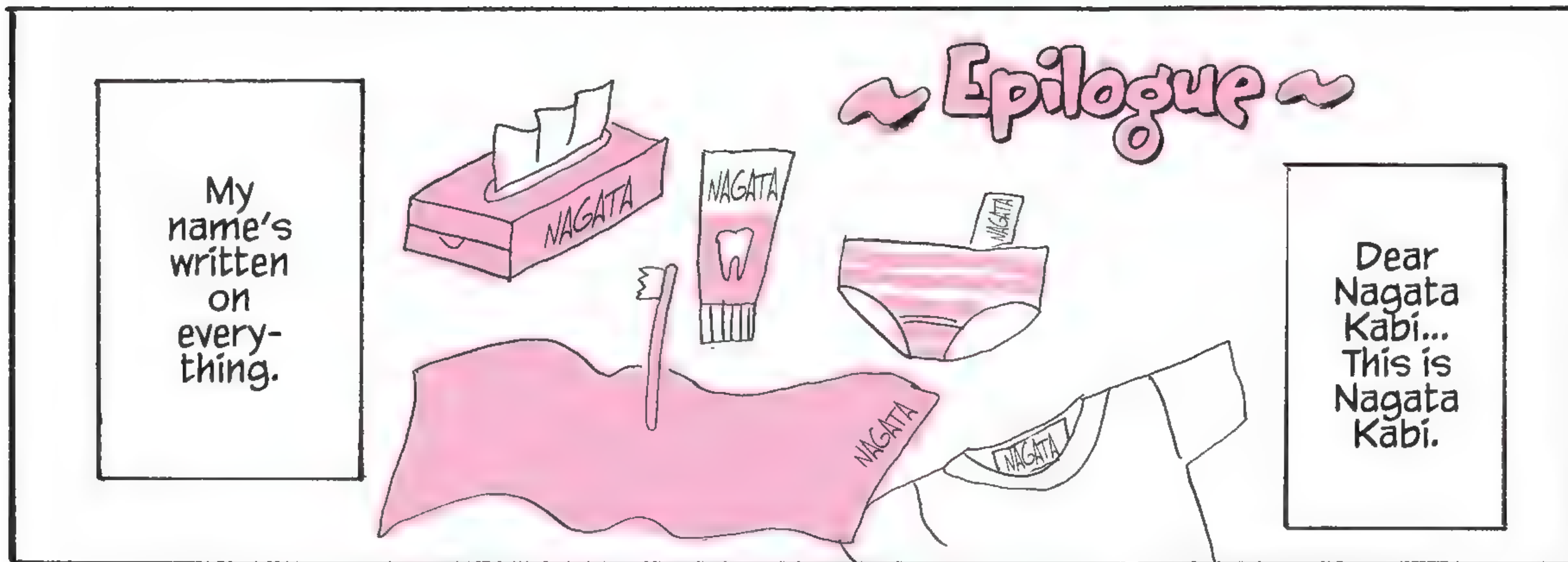


If love
is the
medicine
for this
illness...

then
I knew
that
I would
definitely
get
better.

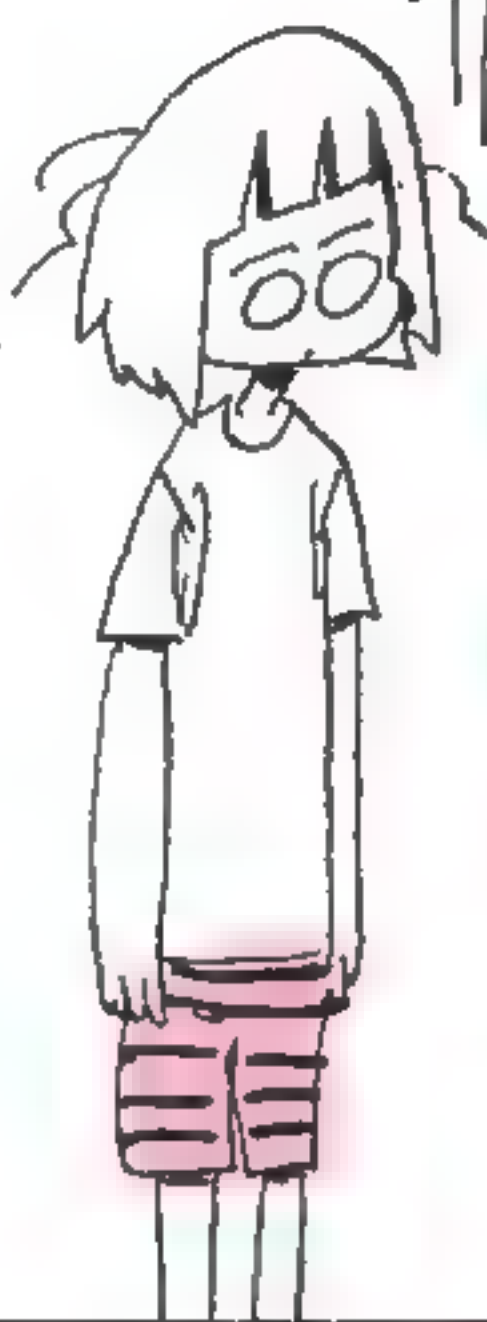
How
are you
doing
in the
future
...?





I didn't
feel
like I
had to.

I COULD
JUST
STEP
OUT
AND GET
ONE...



While I
was
in the
hospital,
I didn't
once
want
a drink.

For about
three days
after I left
the hospital,
I *did* have
some alcohol--
but after
that, I was
satisfied with
non-alcoholic beer.

I LIKE
THE NON-
ALCOHOLIC
KIND~!



IT'S A
CELEBRATION!



I even
went
dry for
a whole
month.



Second:
My
anxiety's
gone
down.

I read
*Healing
Even Serious
Depression
in Two Weeks,
What If...*
by Taizo
Kato.



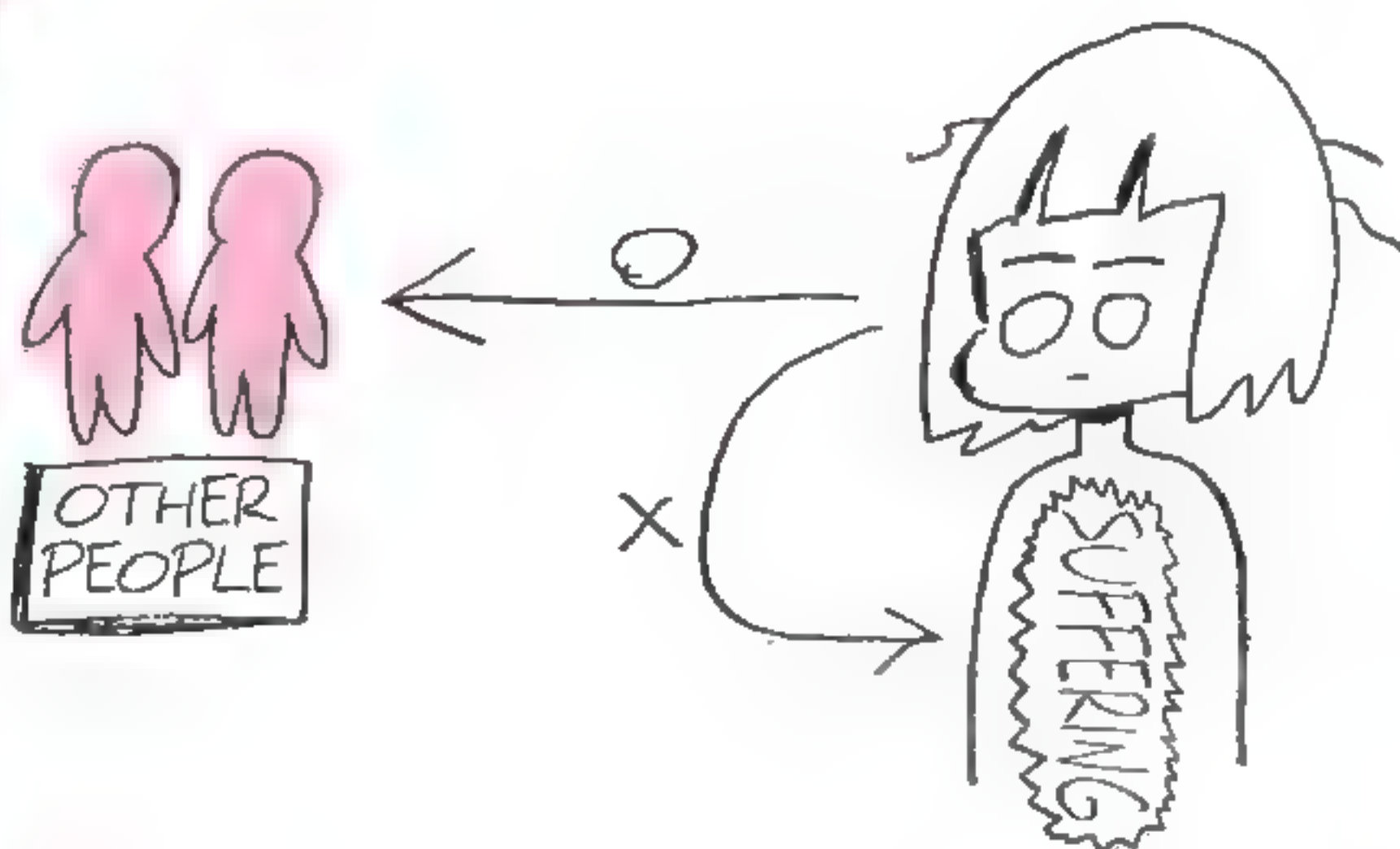
This
apparently
comes
from
Adler.

"WHAT IF...THE FIRST THING YOU DO
EVERY MORNING IS THINK ABOUT
WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE
ANOTHER PERSON TRULY HAPPY,
AND THEN, IF YOU STICK TO THAT..."

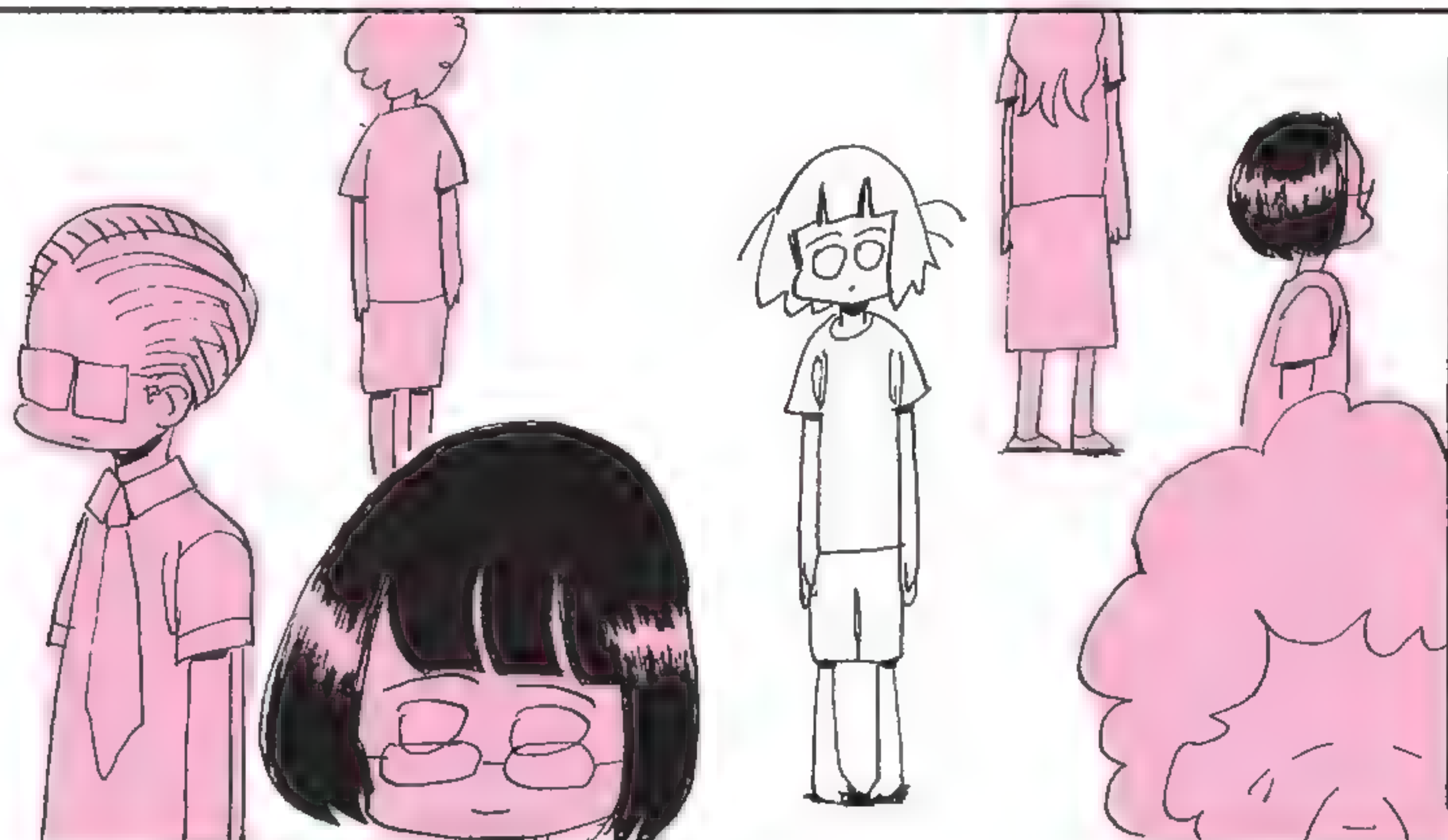
The
"What
if..."
contin-
ues
like
this.



The
thinking
is that if
you're too
fixated on
yourself,
your
depression
won't
improve.



To very roughly
sum up the
book, it's
about turning
your mind **away**
from your own
suffering and
toward other
people.



It made me
realize that
I never
deliberated
over the
problems my
friends and
family faced.

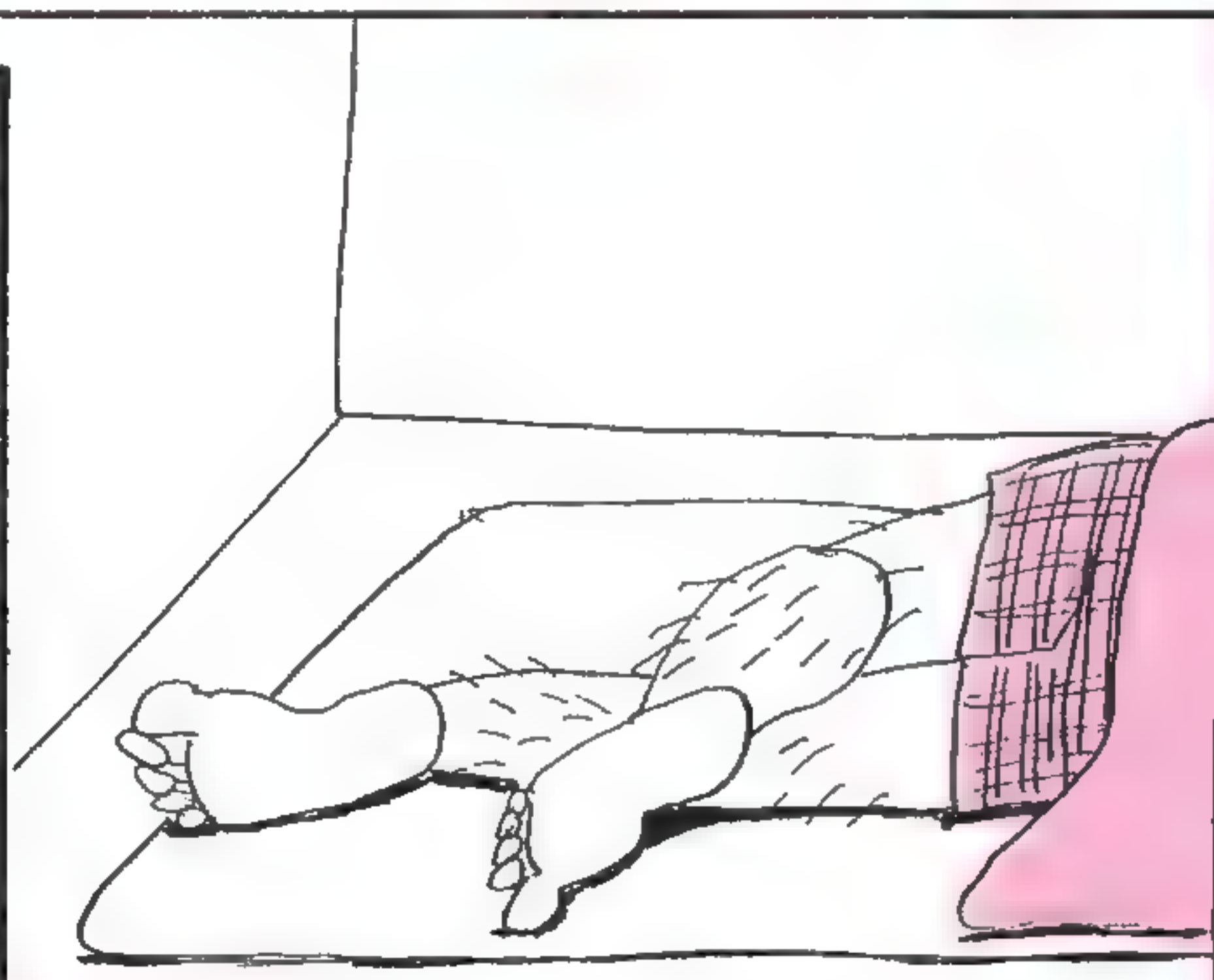
And while I was in the hospital, I was totally fixated on my own suffering and loneliness. I basically never thought about how the other patients were probably having a rough time and wanted to go home, too.



I tested a theory: "Think of several things you **can't** do for someone else." I came up with a lot of stuff.



To be honest, I forgot to do it a lot.

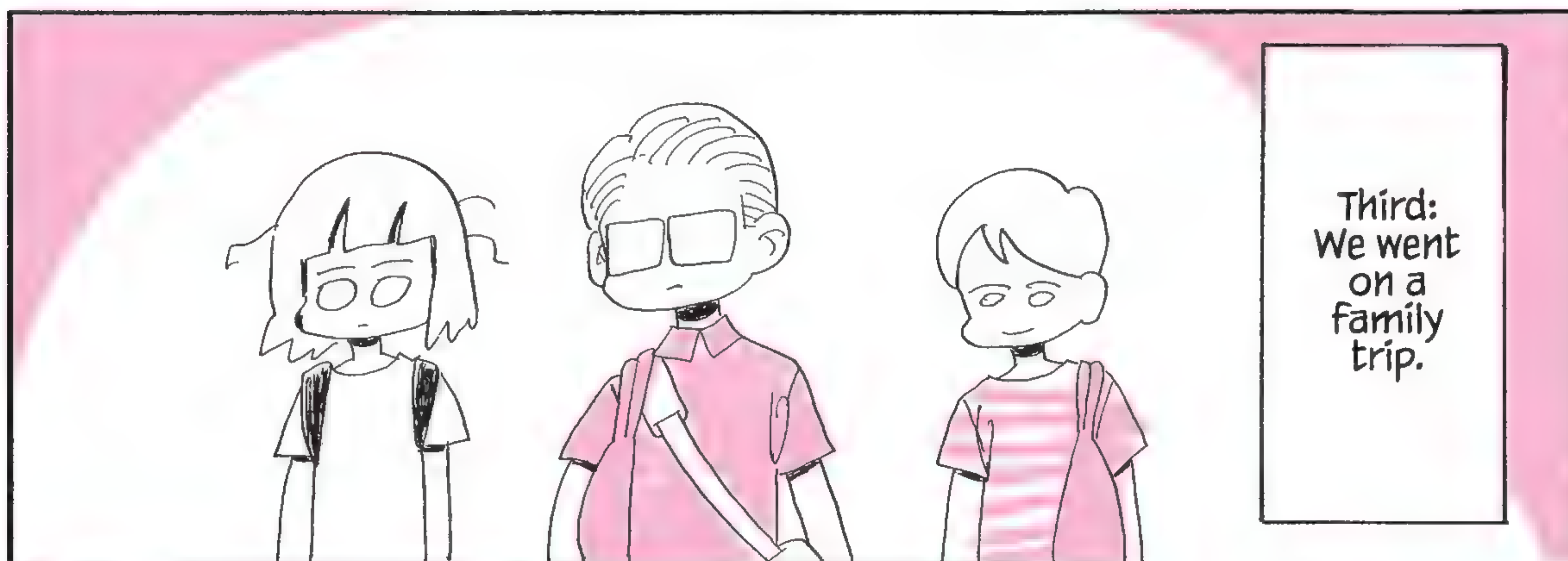


But my first thought in the morning needed to be about making someone else happy. When I woke up, my dad was sleeping in the next room, so I decided to think about making him happy.

I still got a little anxious in the evenings, but I was able to recover from it.



But once I started doing it, my inflated anxiety began to shrink. (I think staying sober helped with that, too.)



Third:
We went
on a
family
trip.



My friend
was
surprised
at how
much
I'd bonded
with my
family.

TRAVELING WITH MY
FAMILY. THE HOTEL
INCLUDES ALL-YOU-
CAN-DRINK.

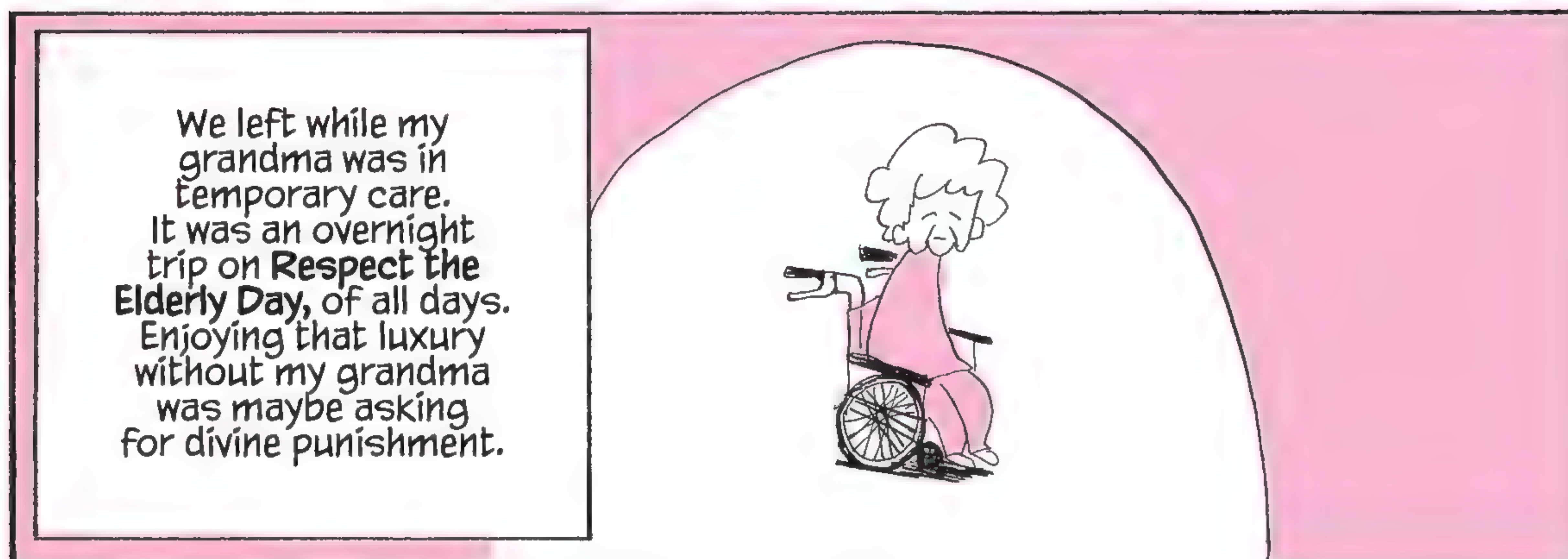
READ
11:11

YOU GUYS HAVE GOTTEN
REALLY CLOSE?!

11:11



I suggested it,
by the way.
I'd never really
treated my
parents with
the money I'd
earned, so we
decided to go
somewhere.



We left while my
grandma was in
temporary care.
It was an overnight
trip on **Respect the
Elderly Day**, of all days.
Enjoying that luxury
without my grandma
was maybe asking
for divine punishment.

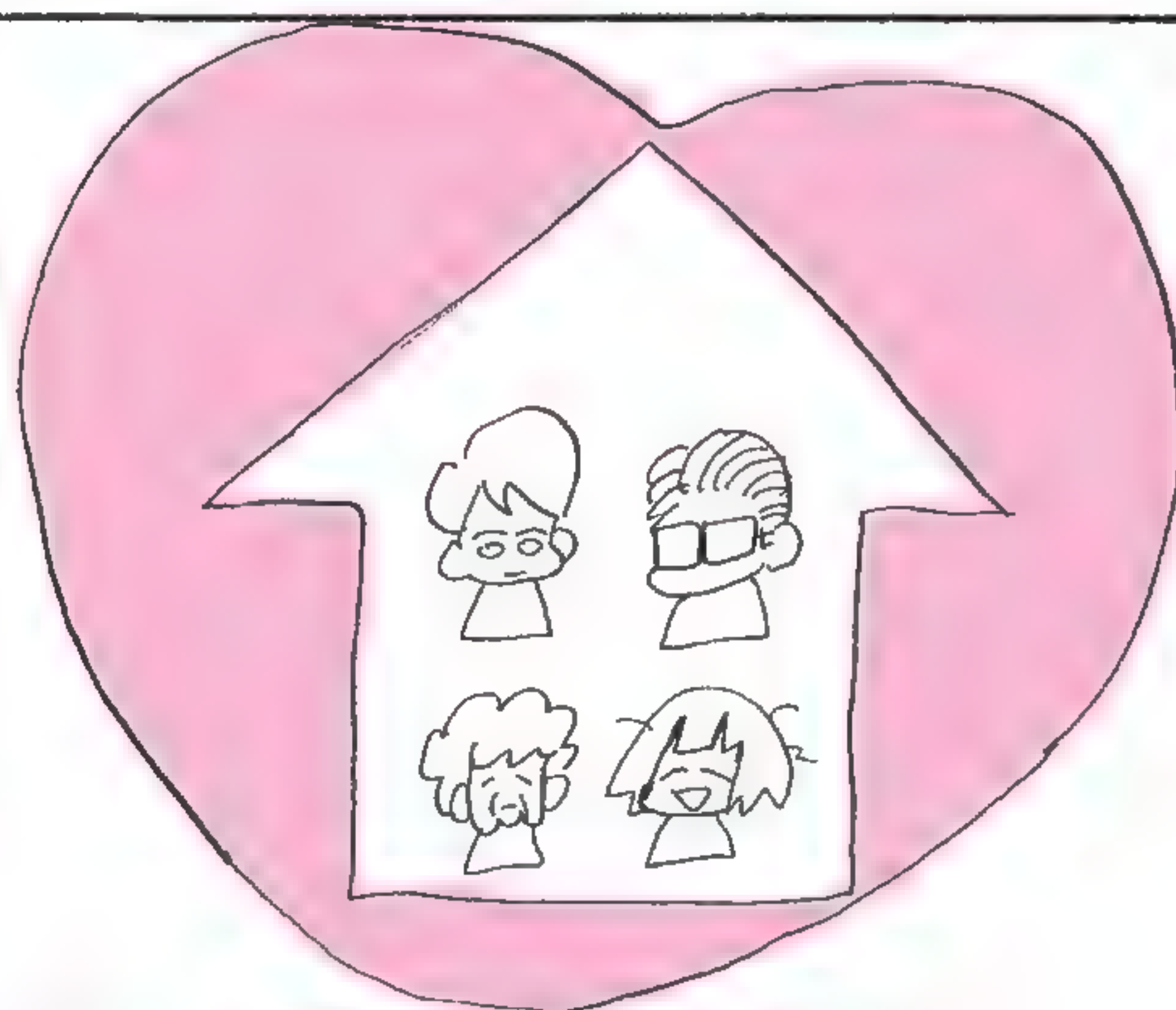
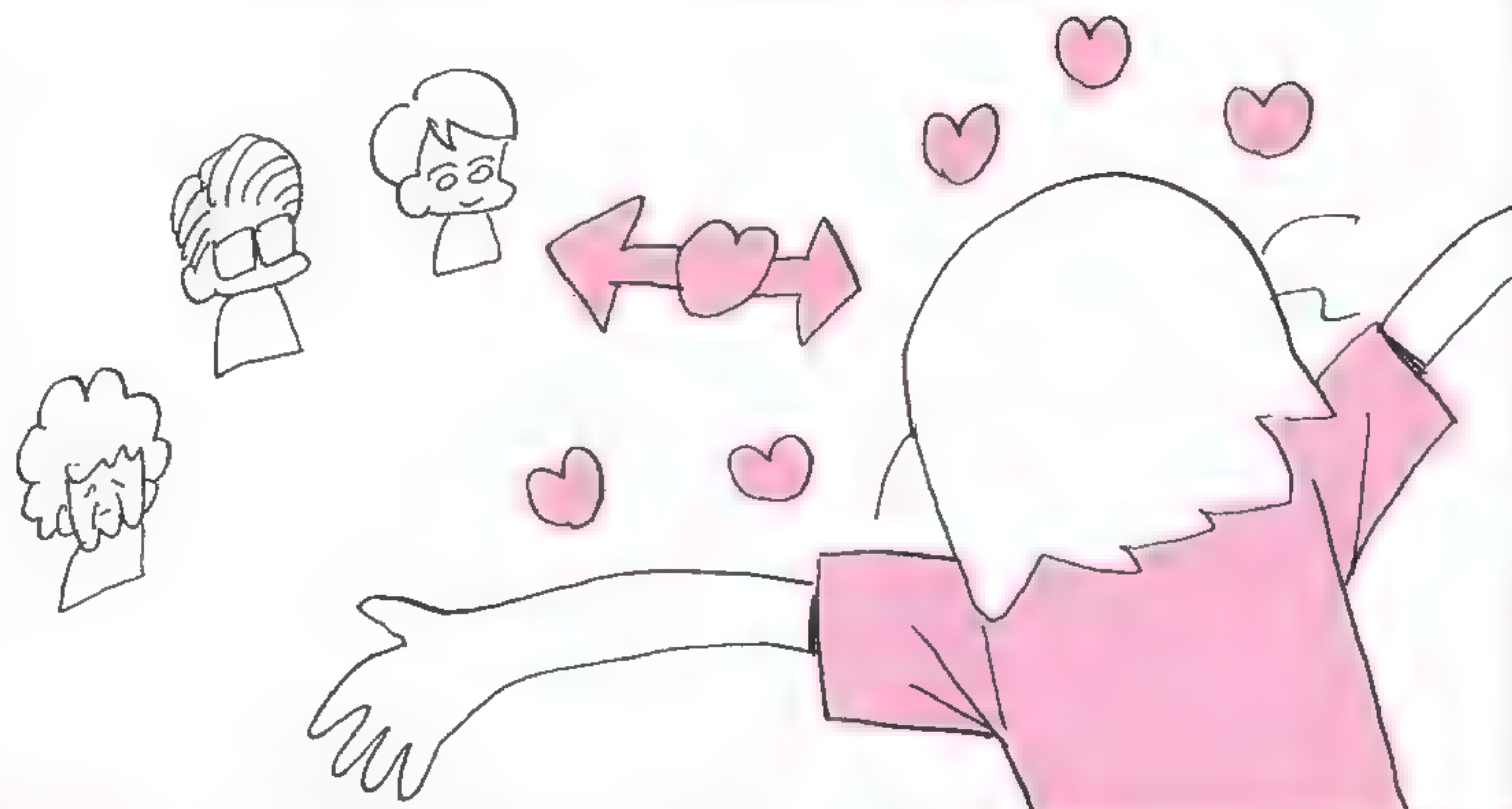


I tried to
get my
money's worth
out of the all-
you-can-drink
thing, so I ended
up going
home with
a hangover.



We
visited an
aquarium.
At the hotel,
I had a drink
for the first
time in over
a month.

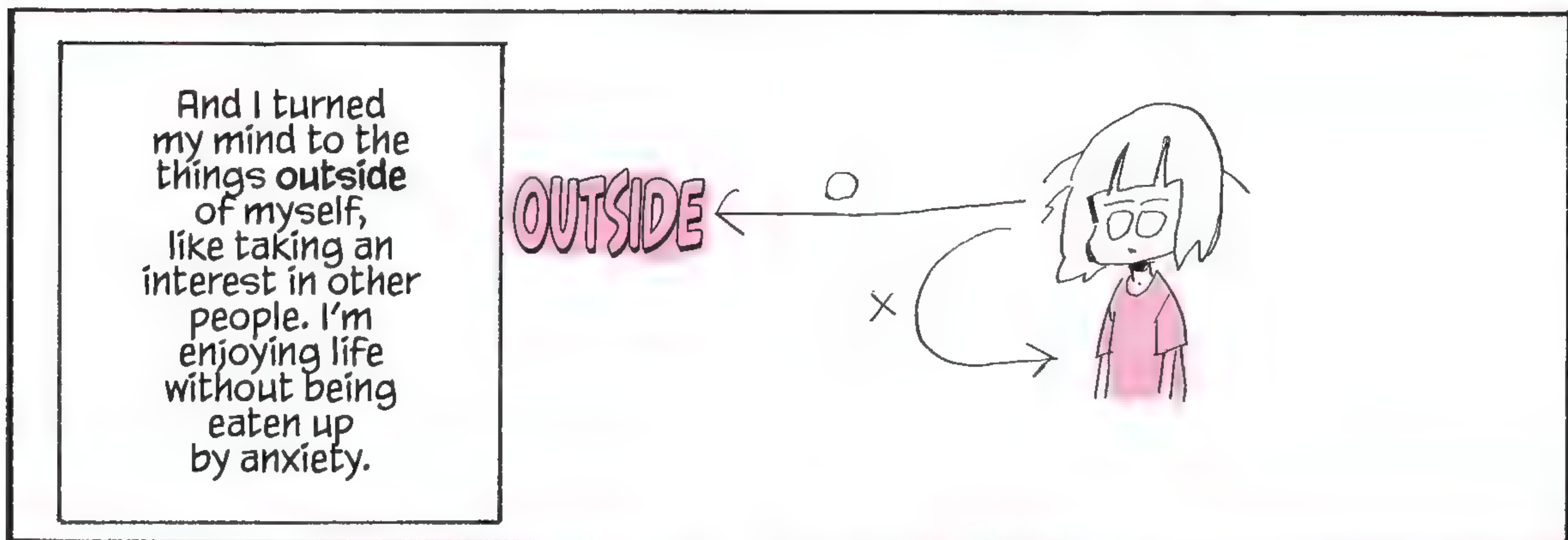
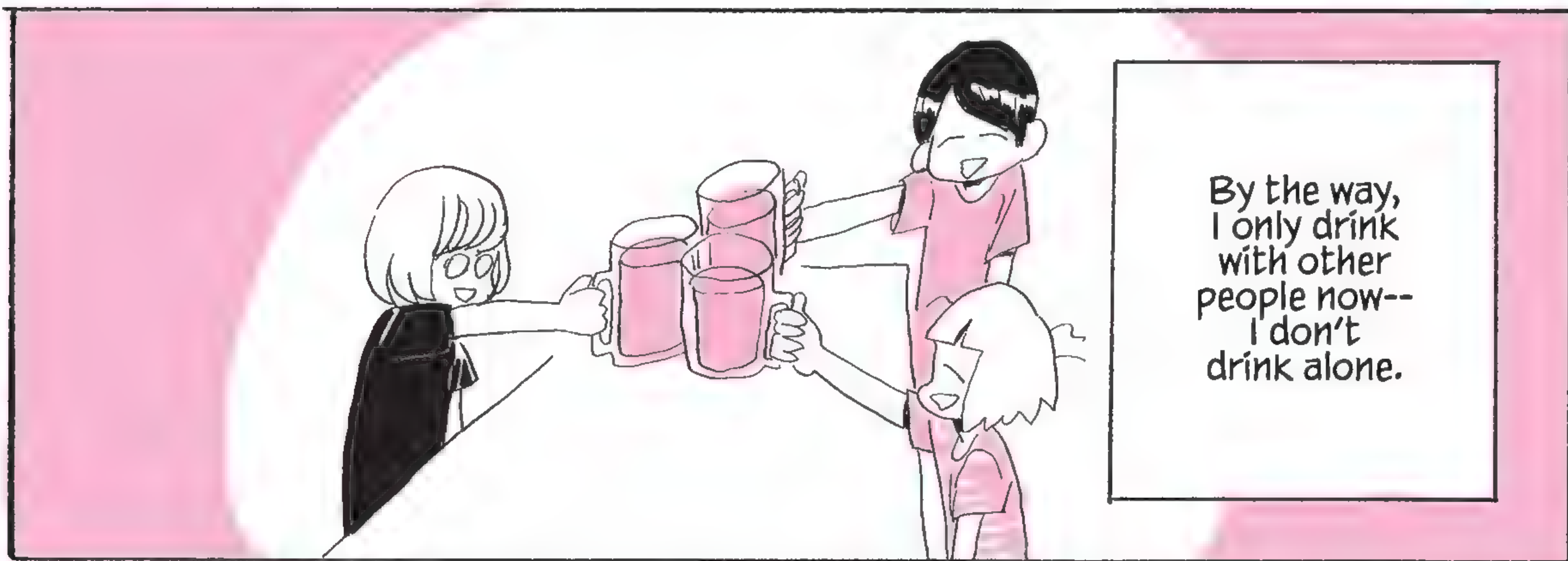
Lately,
I've *really*
been able to
feel all my
family's love...
so now I adore
the family
I used to
hate.



I guess
"loving
and being
loved"
happened
right
in my
home.

Now I'll
try to
find it
outside
my
family,
too.





They're
like my
stepping
stones on
the path
I take as
I journey
into the
future.

I have
a lot
of
wishes.

How
are you
doing
in that
future?

I DO
OVER-
HYDRATE.



I have one more epilogue for you.

POP

~ Epilogue 2 ~

Hello again. This is Nagata Kabi.

But now that the series is **over**, something new crossed my mind.

SERIES UPDATING

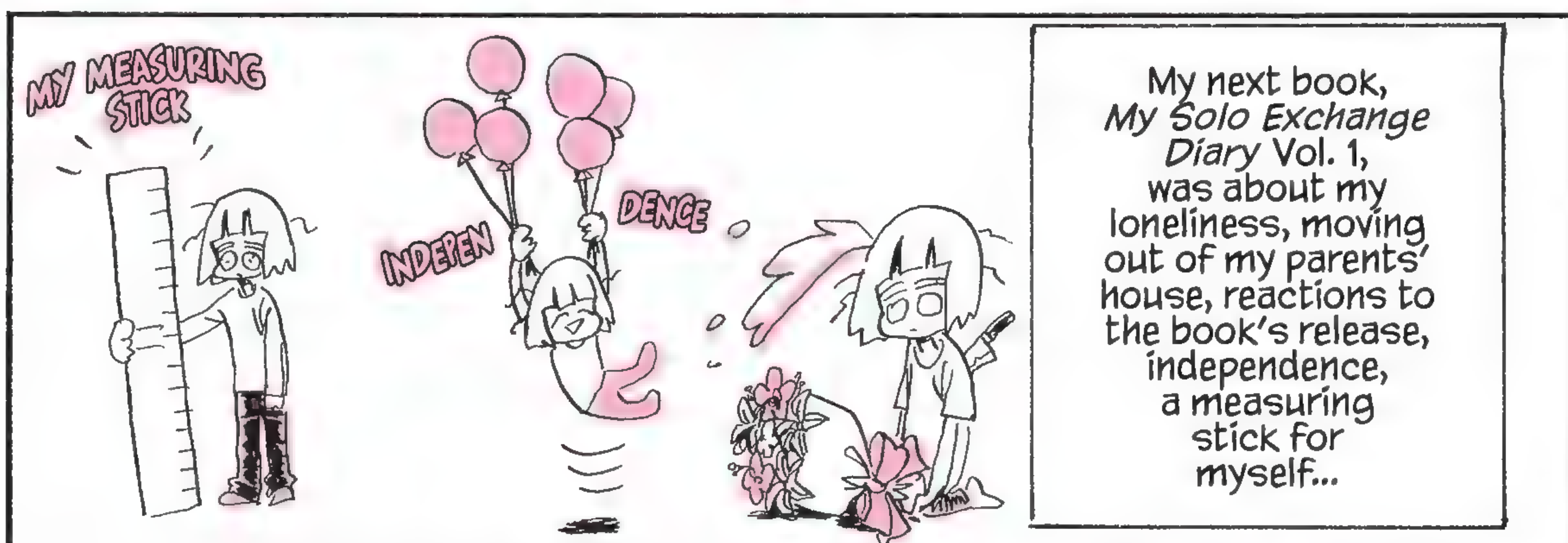
To clarify, when I wrote the first epilogue, the series was still being updated.

In my first book, *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness...*

I wrote about the loneliness, the pain, the lack of **belonging** since the end of my teens. I documented my trip to a lesbian escort agency.



I went up to the point where people started reacting to my manga, and I obtained the sweet nectar of finding a place in this world.



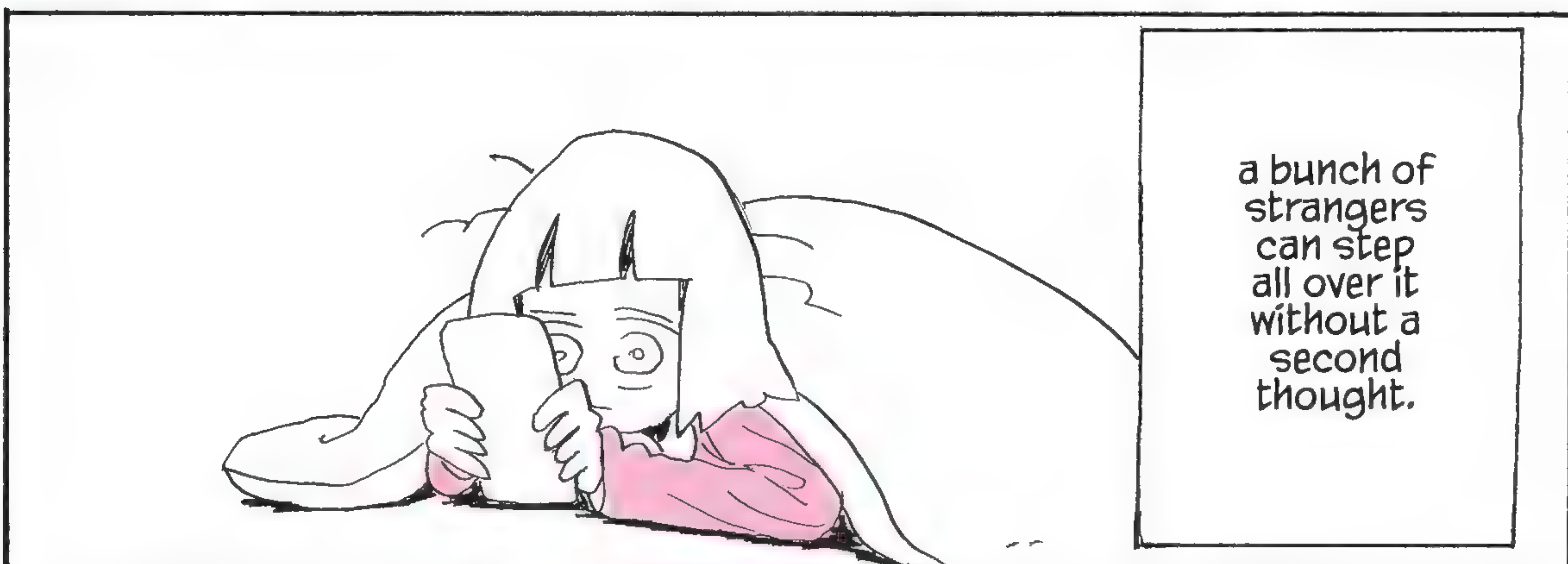
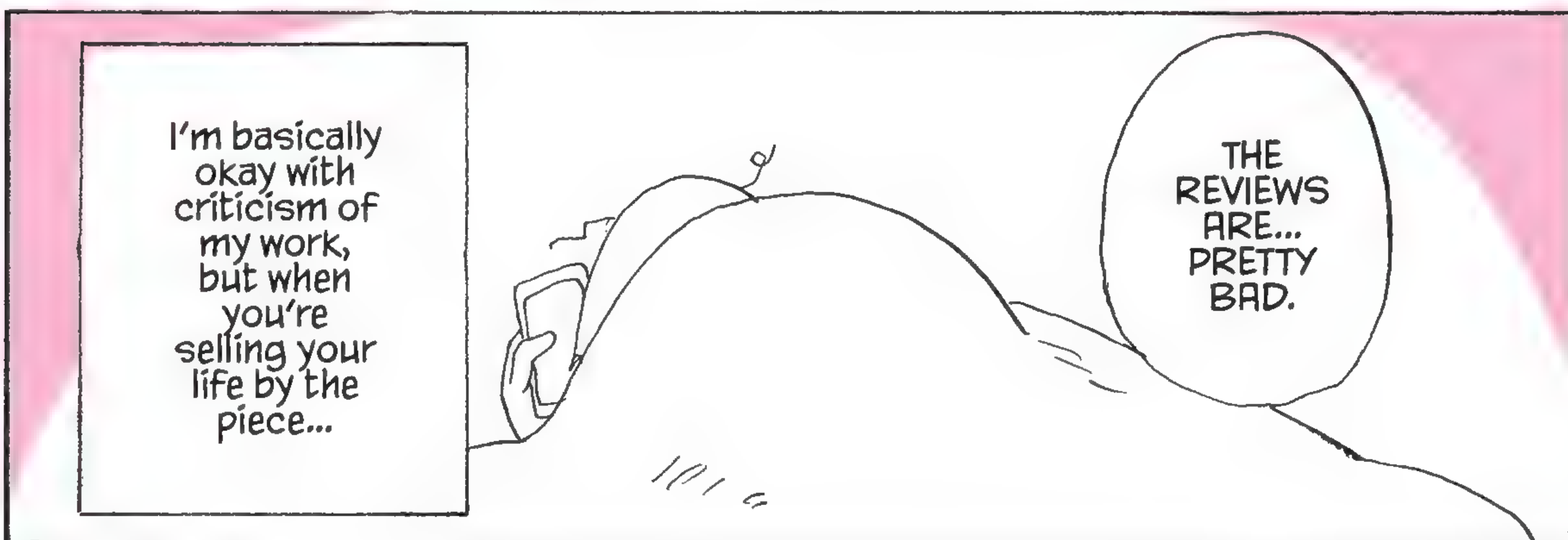
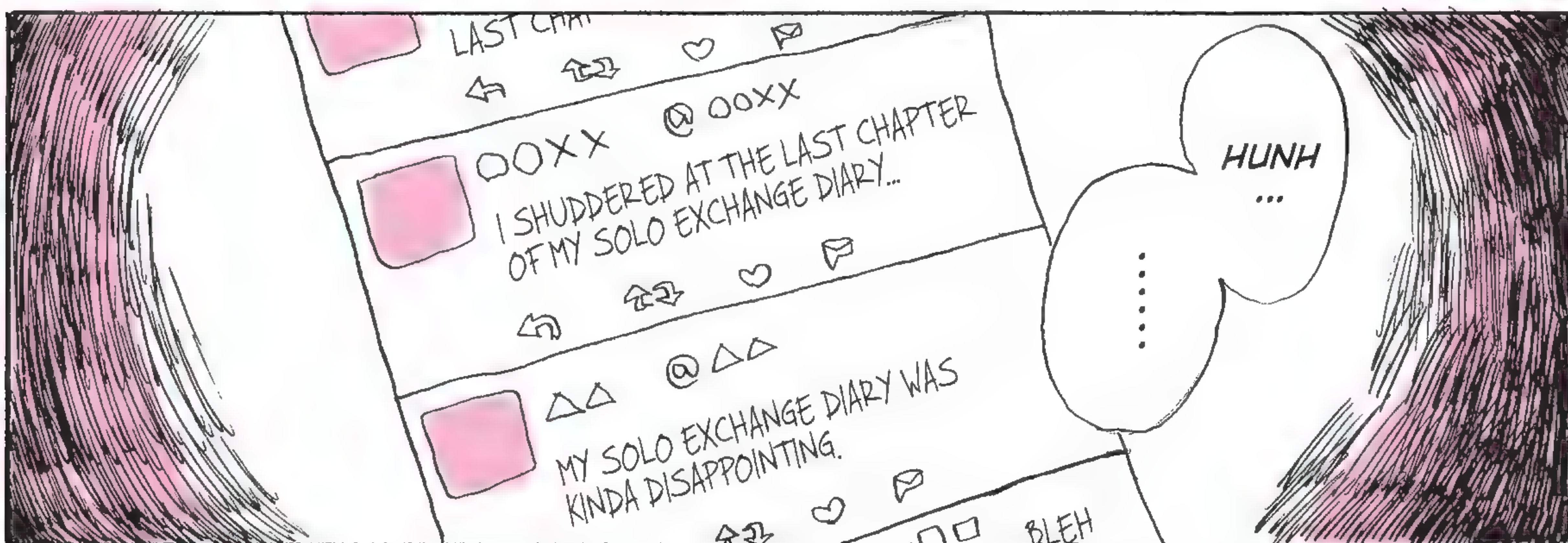
My next book, *My Solo Exchange Diary Vol. 1*, was about my loneliness, moving out of my parents' house, reactions to the book's release, independence, a measuring stick for myself...



and the good will turned toward me, for the first time, as love.



The manga collected in **this** book are about the love I received from a bunch of different people.





I'M
PREPPING
THESE NEW
CHAPTERS TO
BECOME A
VOLUME 2.
WHAT DO
I DO?

BUT,
UH...



FRET

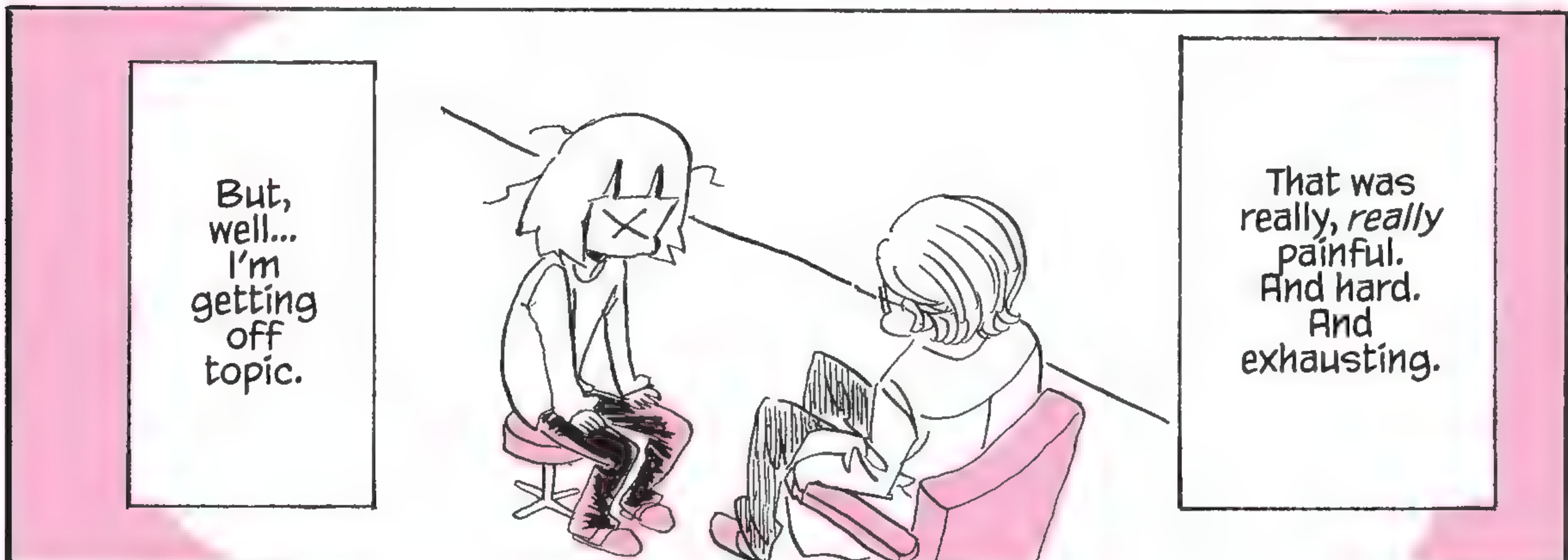
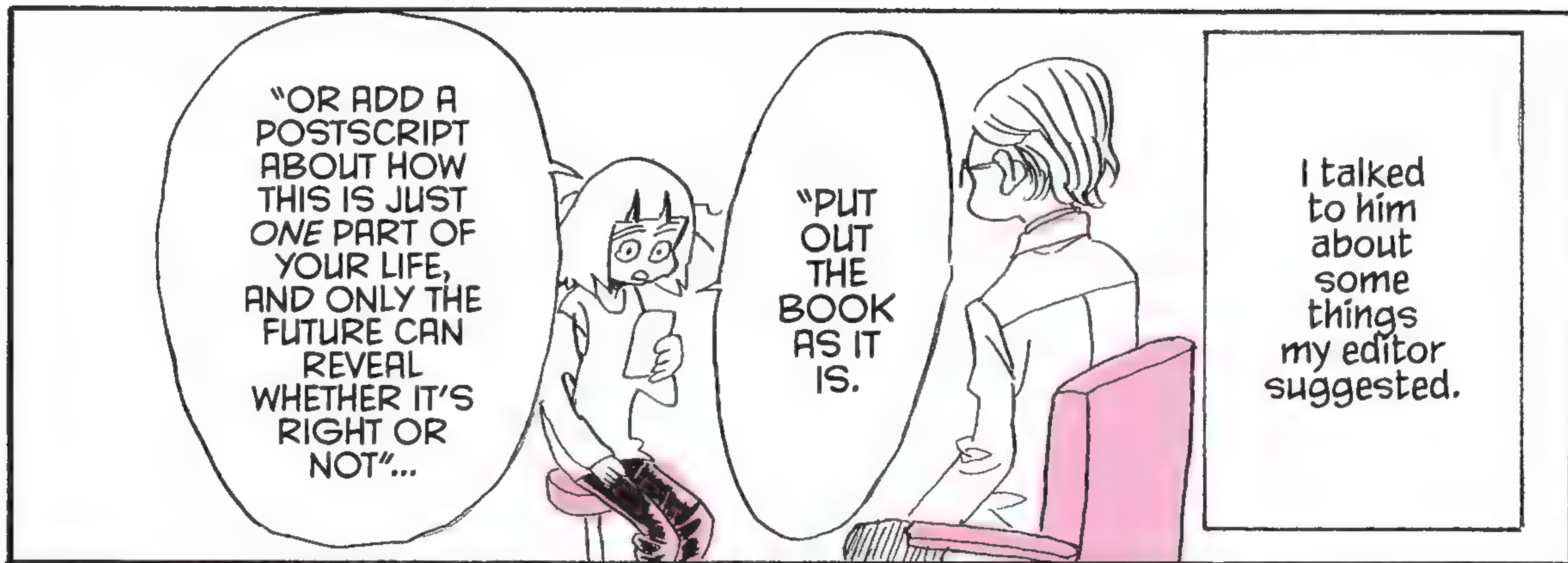
FRET

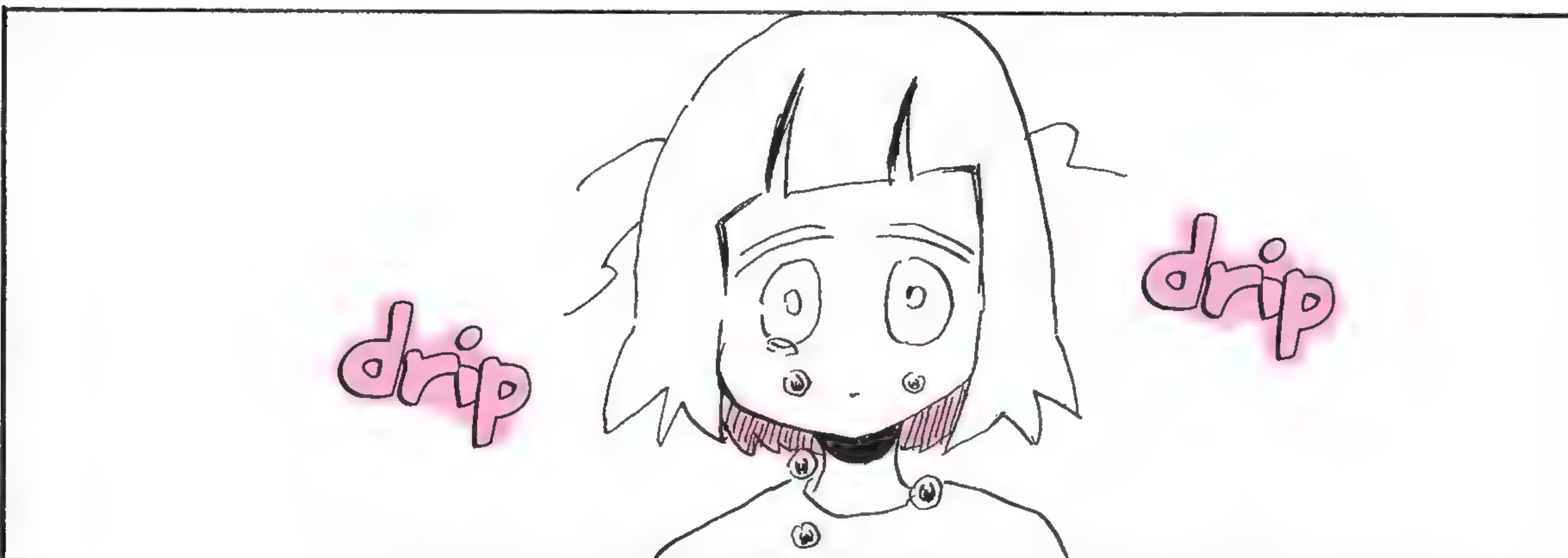
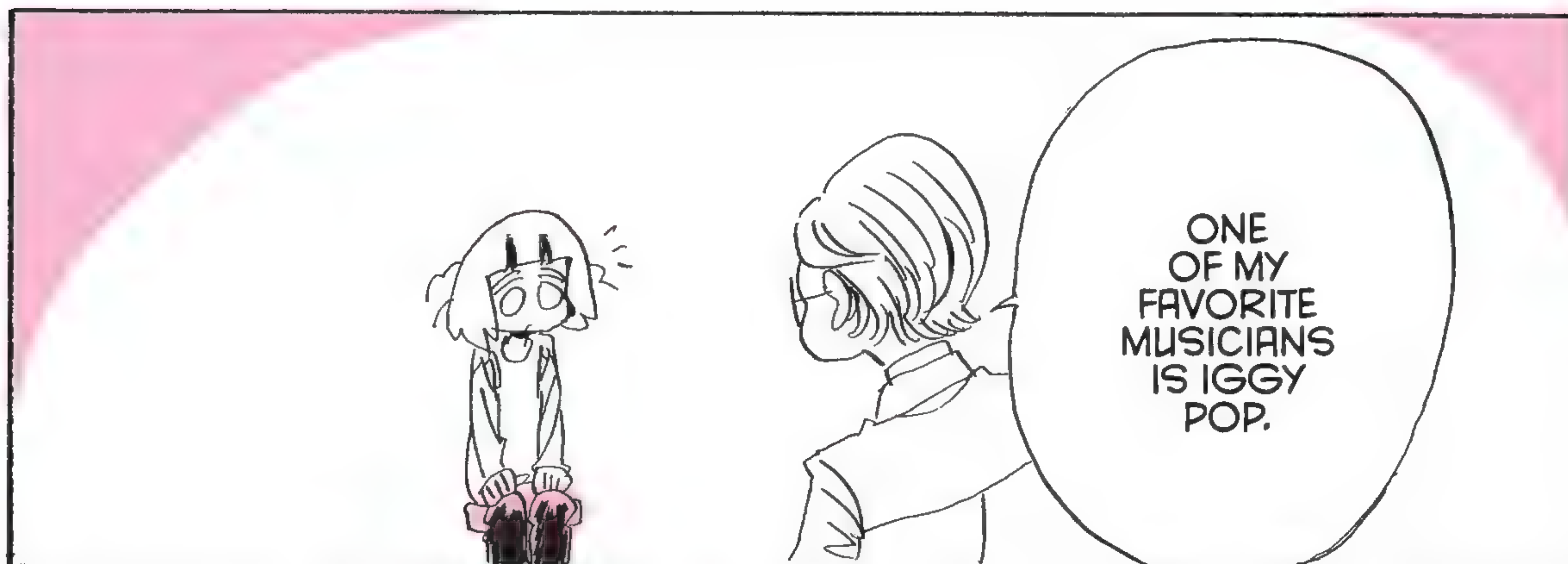
I lost
my head
and
mailed
my friends
and
editor.



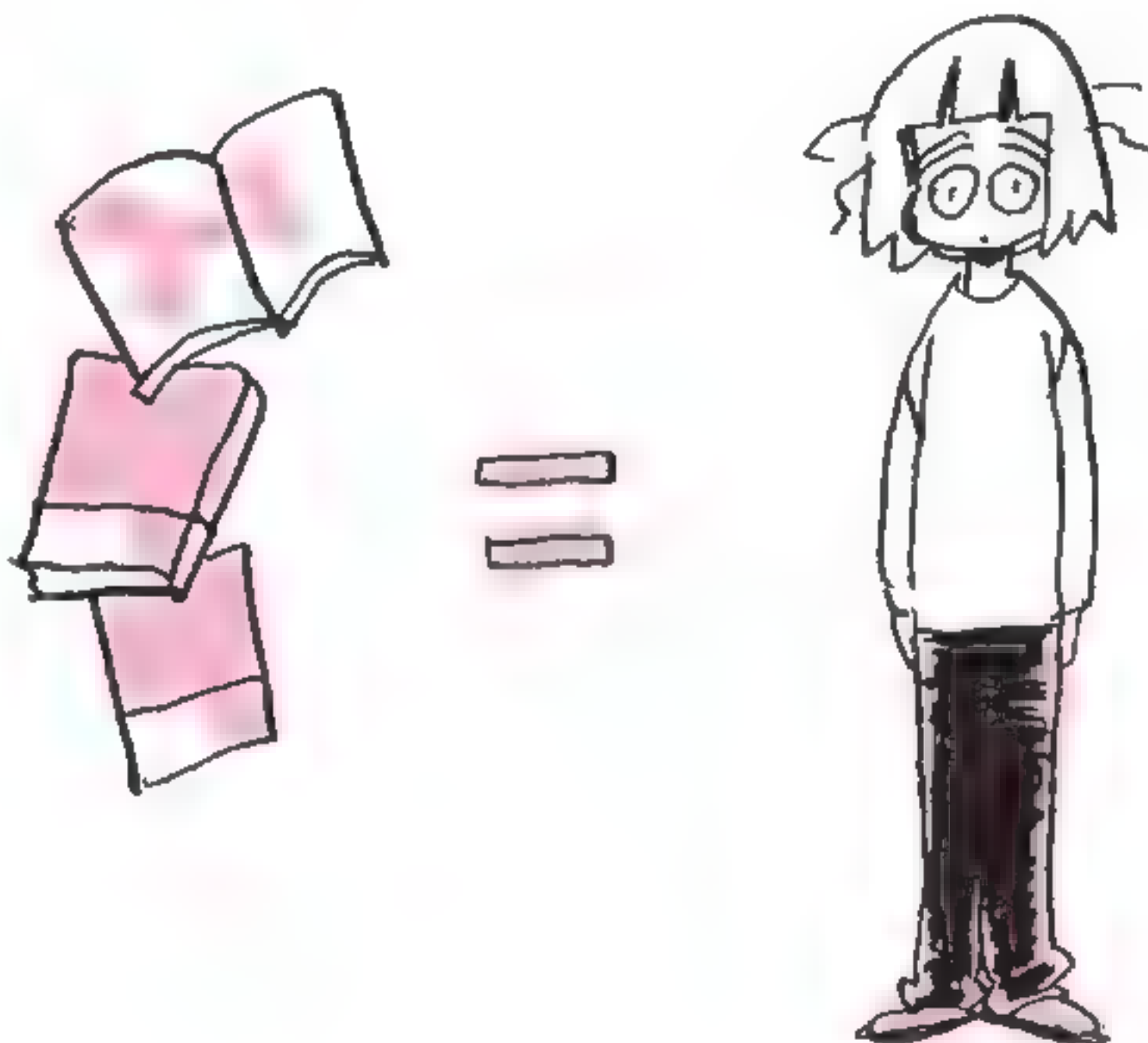
I was so
anxious,
I even went
to my
doctor.

STAGGER
STAGGER





I draw
it for
a living,
so I'm
selling
my life in
pieces.



That's the
perfect
way to
describe
my manga.
It's my life.

But
it's
still
my
life.



RETURNED



FINISHED



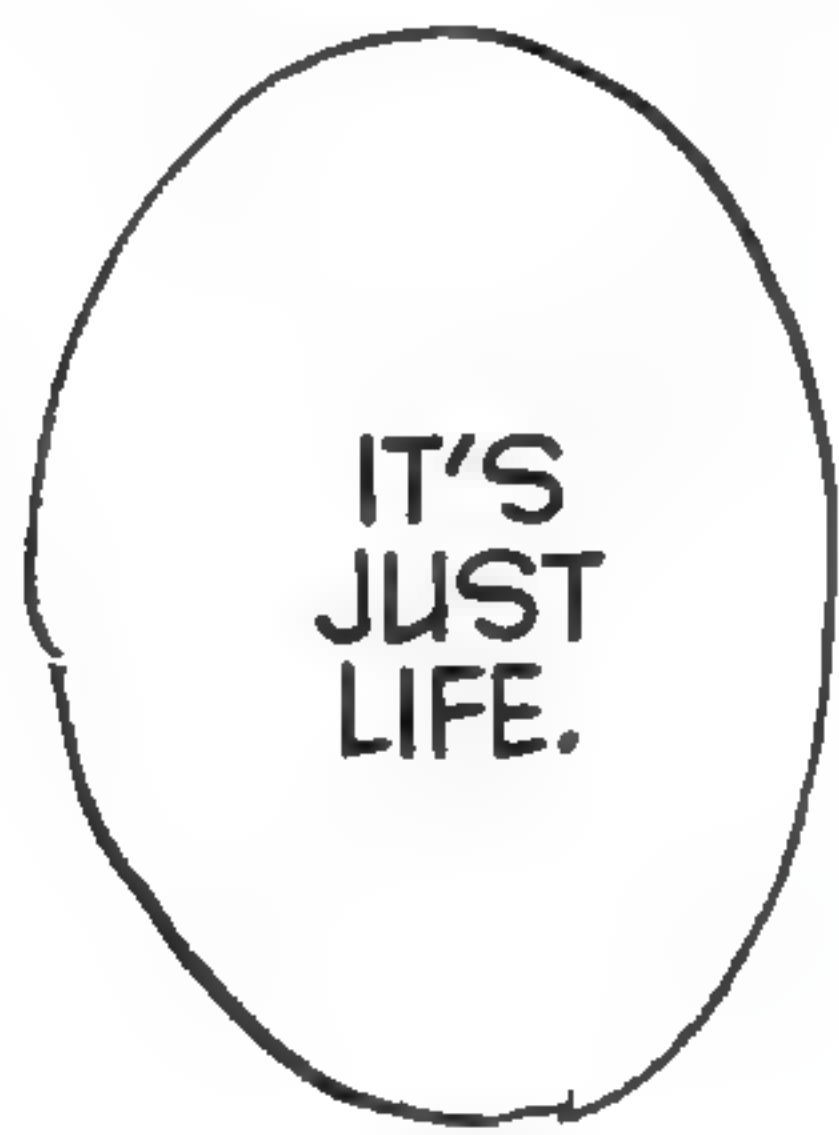
TEST



And
because it's
my lived
experiences,
I won't know
if this is
right until
the future
comes.

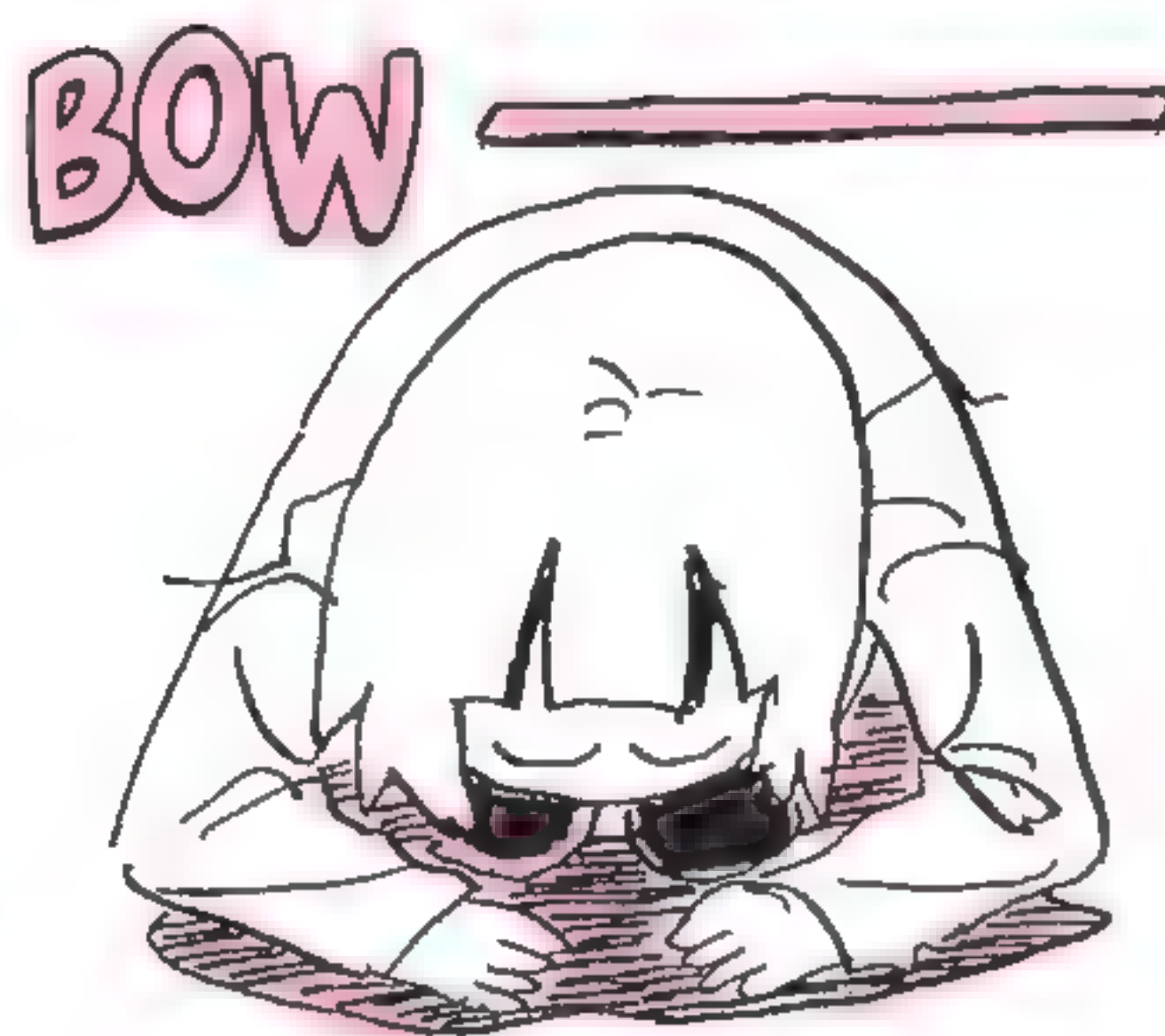
That's
why it can
take a
weird shape
sometimes.

10. IN WHAT YEAR
WAS THE CAPITAL
MOVED TO NARA?
A. (7100) ✓



That talk
awakened
something
inside
of me.

So I
appreciate
your
under-
standing
in this.



As
for me,
after
the
seriali-
zation...

Now it's
made
me a
dramat-
ically
cheap
drunk.



I wrote in
the first
epilogue
that I
abstained
from
booze.



I get along
with my family,
and there
are some
days when
we don't say
a single
word to
each other.

It feels
like I'm still
figuring out
the best
distance
to keep
between
us.



my
friends
really
helped
me with
that.



Also,
when I
Googled
myself
and
freaked
out...

"I'm
not
alone
any-
more."



It
made
me
think...

Probably.



I'm
definitely
gonna be
able to
make it
in the
future.

You're
already
in the
future.
How's it
going out
there...?

FLOP



Collects chapters from 3/13, 3/27, 4/10, 7/24, 8/21, 8/28, 9/11, 9/25, 10/10, 10/23,
and 11/13, 2017. Epilogues previously unpublished.
"Chika-chan's Depression" from the March 2017 *Big Comic Spirits Special: HiBaNa* magazine.

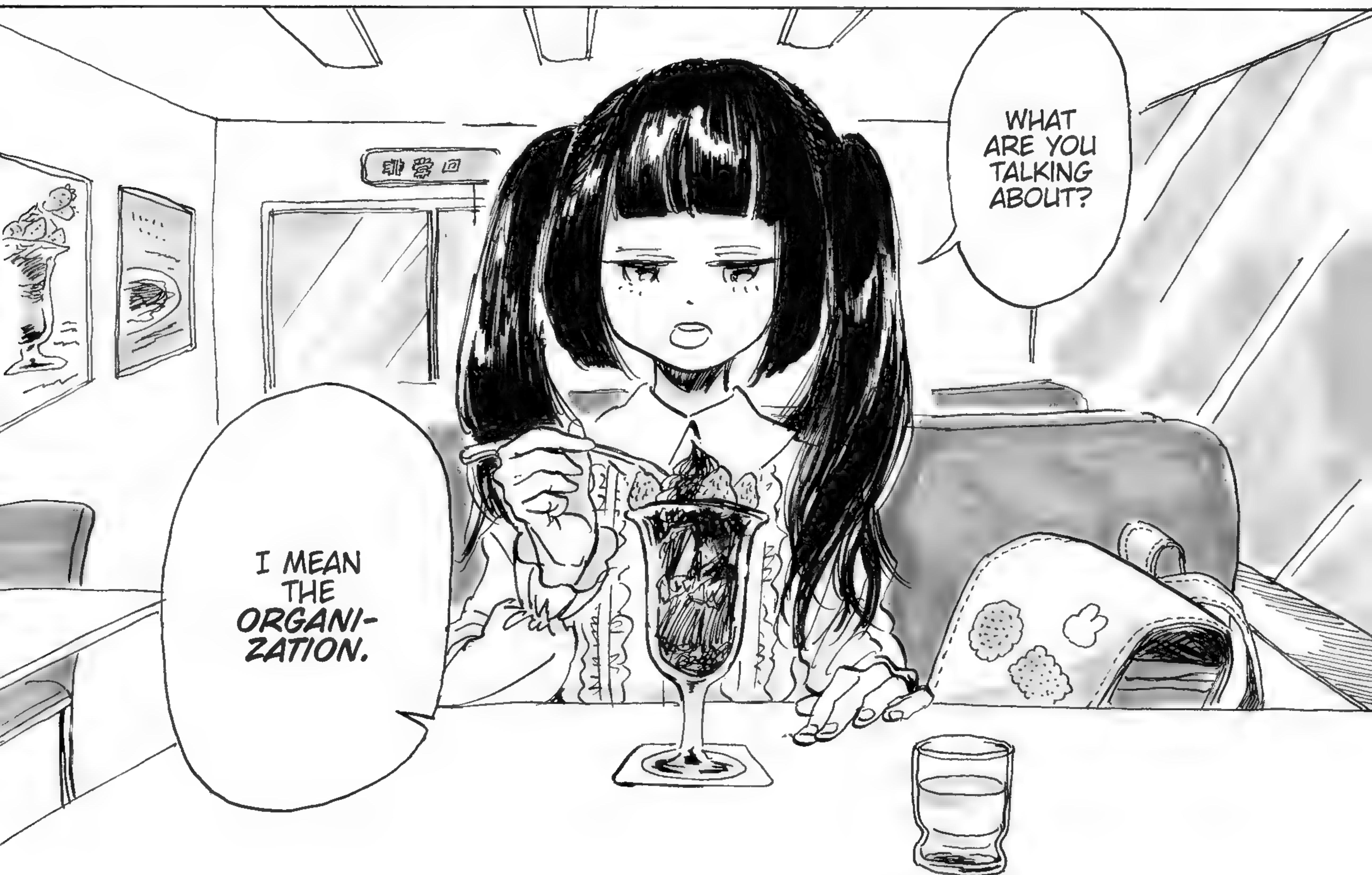
CHIKA-CHAN'S DEPRESSION





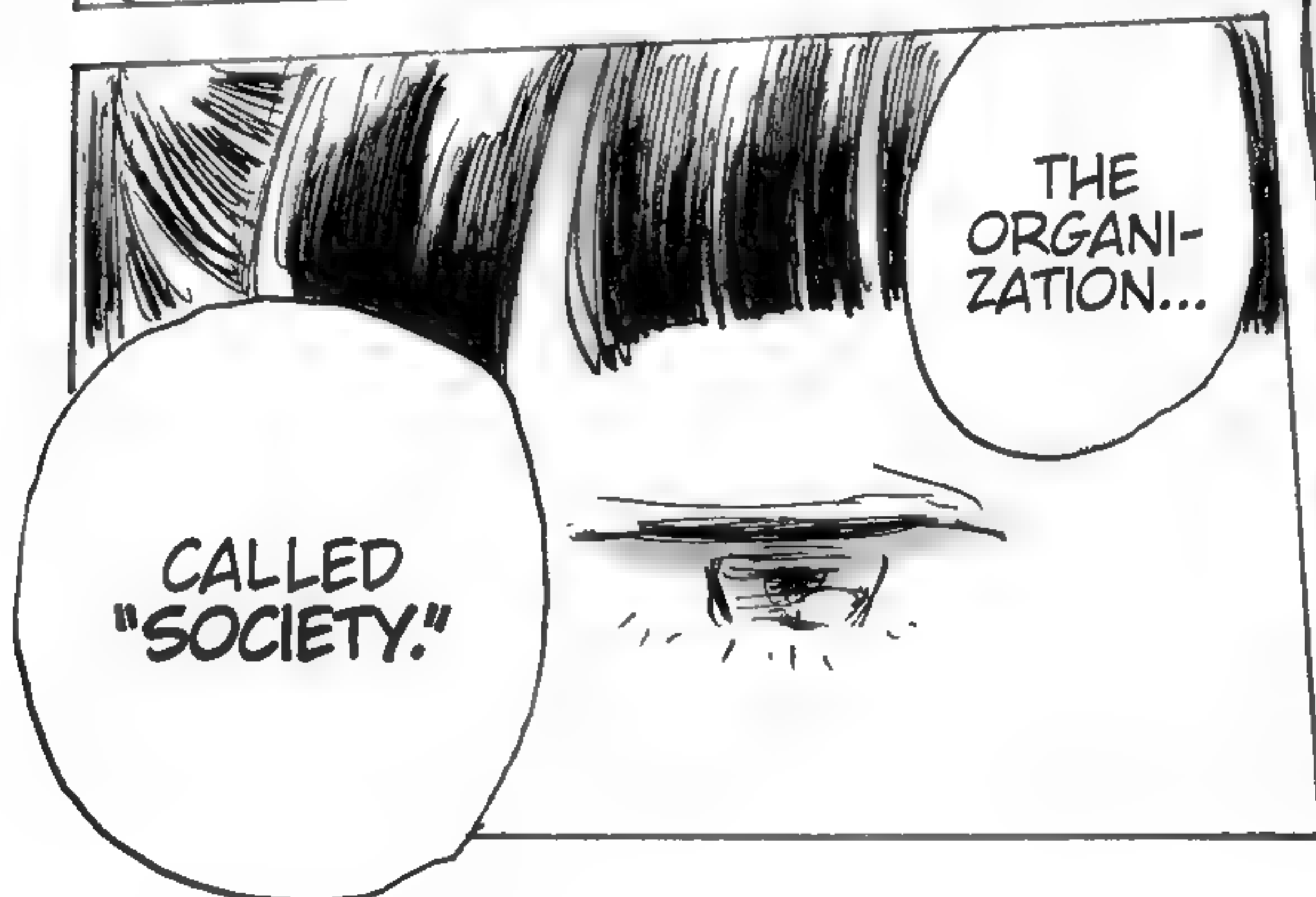
NASTY
AS
EVER?

SO,
CHIKA-
CHAN?
HOW ARE
THINGS?



WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?

I MEAN
THE
ORGANI-
ZATION.





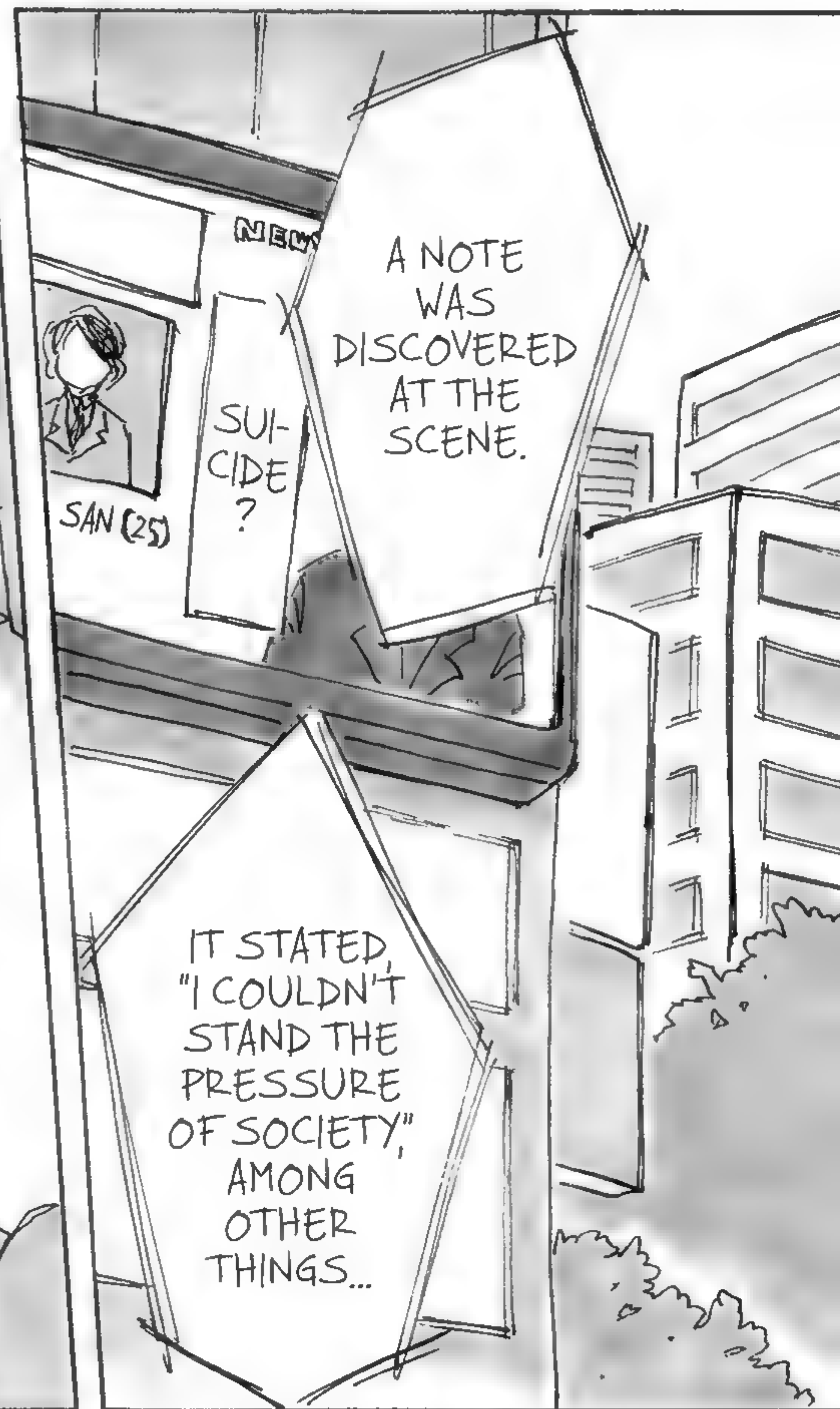
IN THIS COUNTRY, THE MAJORITY OF CITIZENS ARE DEEMED "SOCIETY CONSTITUENTS."

BUT NO ONE KNOWS THE TRUE FORM OF SOCIETY. IT'S A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION THAT LOOMS OVER ITS PEOPLE.



THE ORGANIZATION STRIKES AGAIN.

THEY JUST NEVER STOP, DO THEY?!





THEY MIGHT EVEN KILL YOU.

TRIP ONCE AND THEY'LL ZERO IN ON YOU.



BUT YOU'RE ONLY DEAD IF YOU LOSE HEART.

CHIKA-CHAN...

THE ORGANIZATION MIGHT HAVE US BEAT IN NUMBERS ...



ALL THEY NEED IS A REASON-- THEN OUT COME THE CLAWS.

OFFING SOMEONE'S CHEAPER AND FASTER THAN REMAKING 'EM INTO WHAT SOCIETY WANTS.



OH!

I'M GOING TO STOP HERE--I'VE GOT SOME CLOTHES ON HOLD.

SURE.



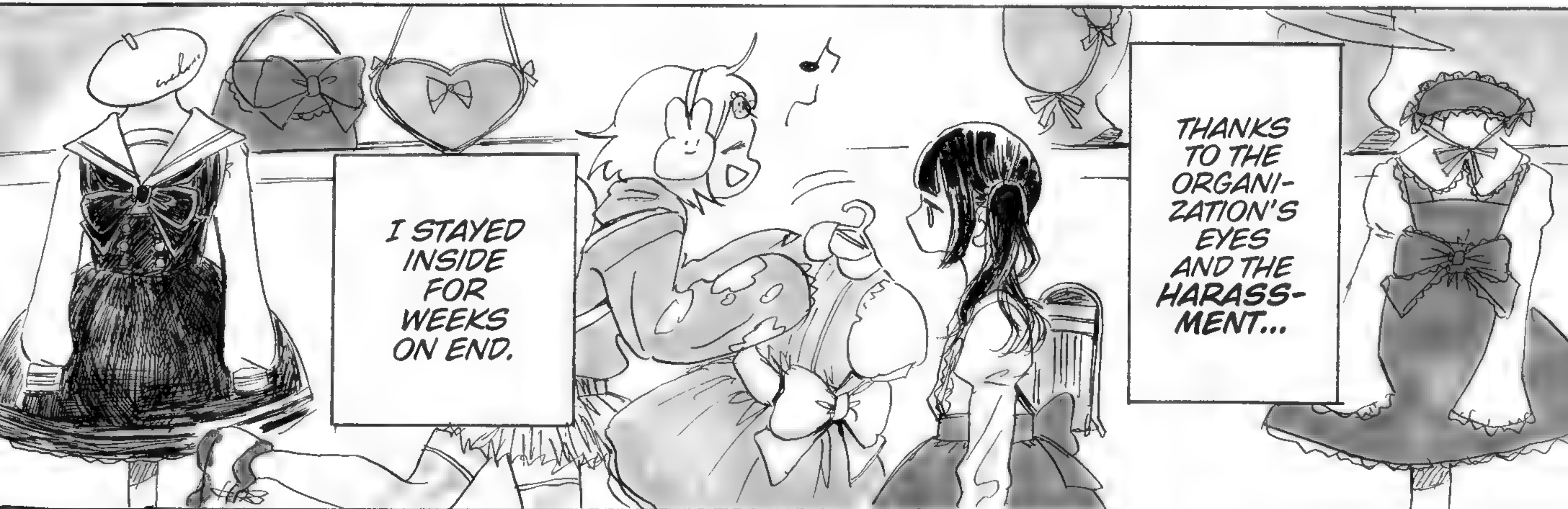
BECAUSE YOU'RE PROTECTING ME, NON-CHAN.

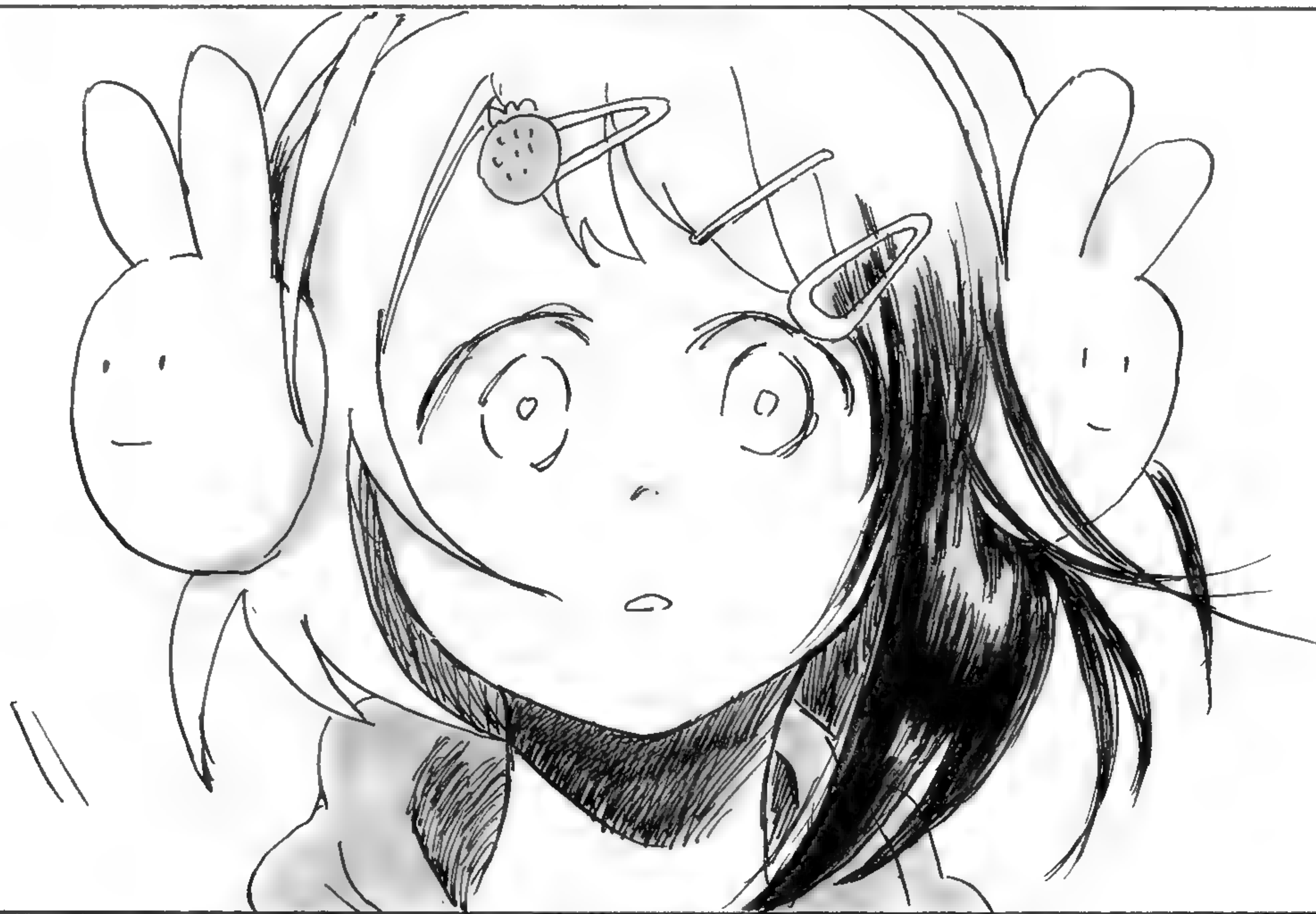
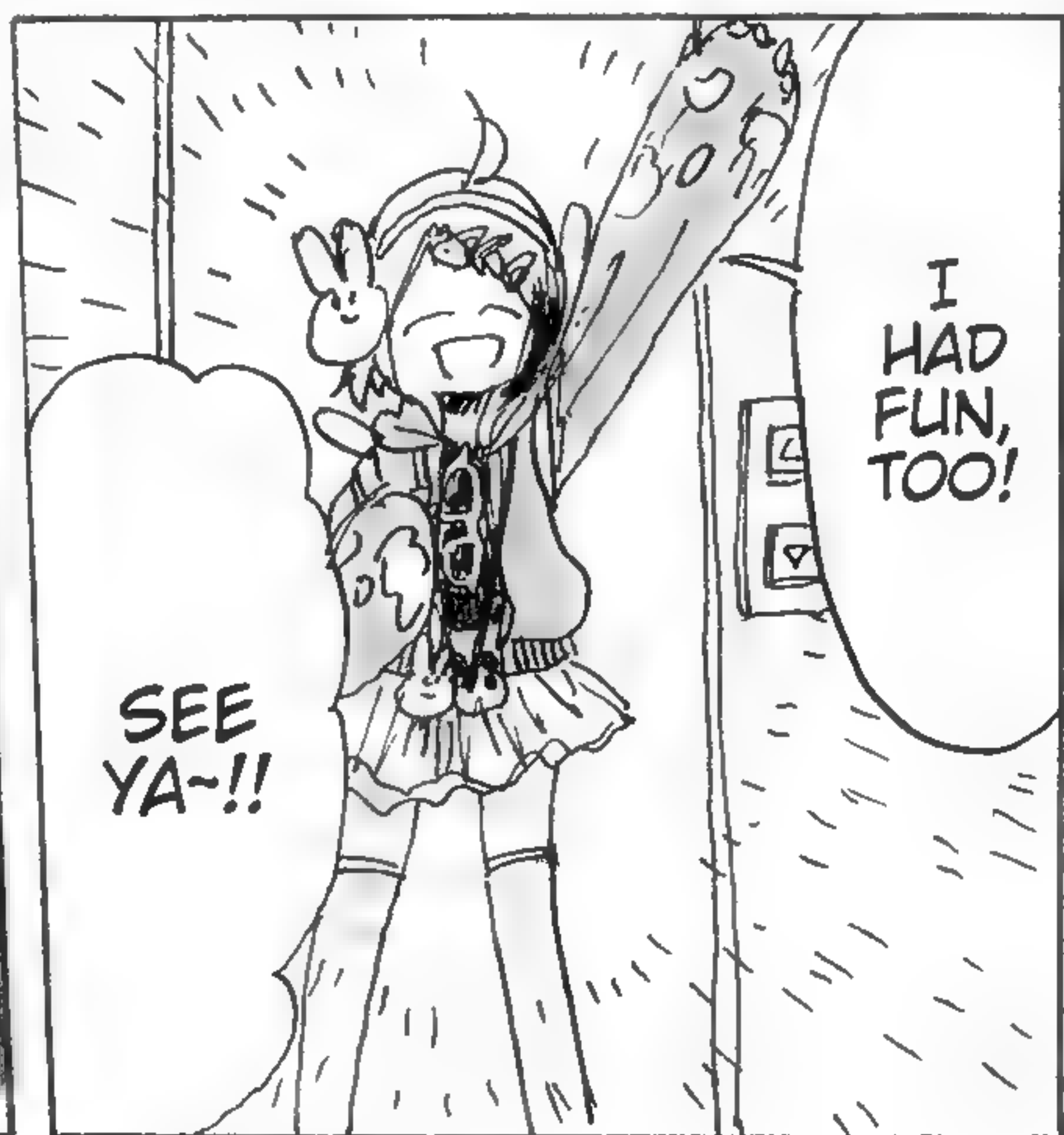
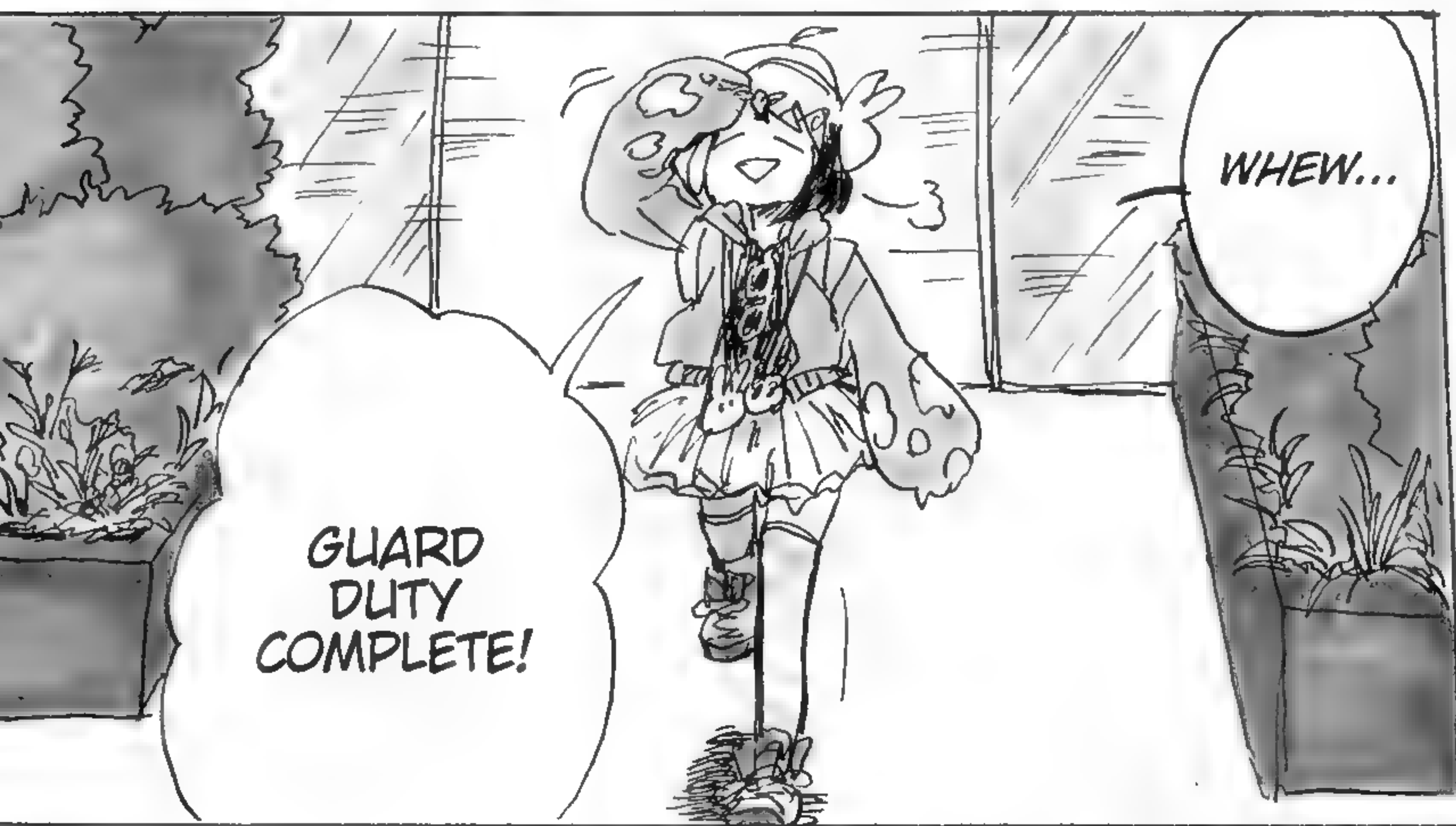
HEH HEH! AW~!

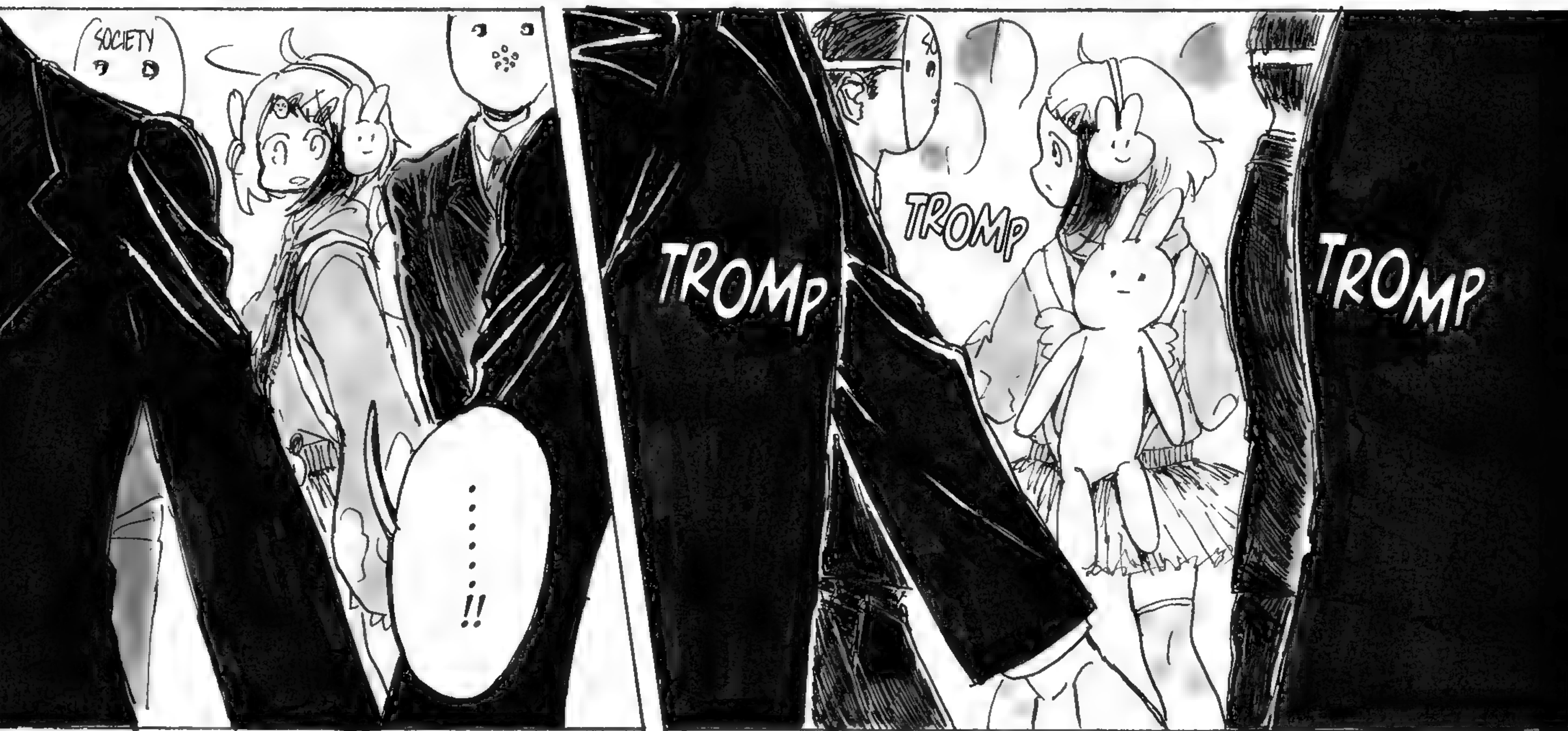
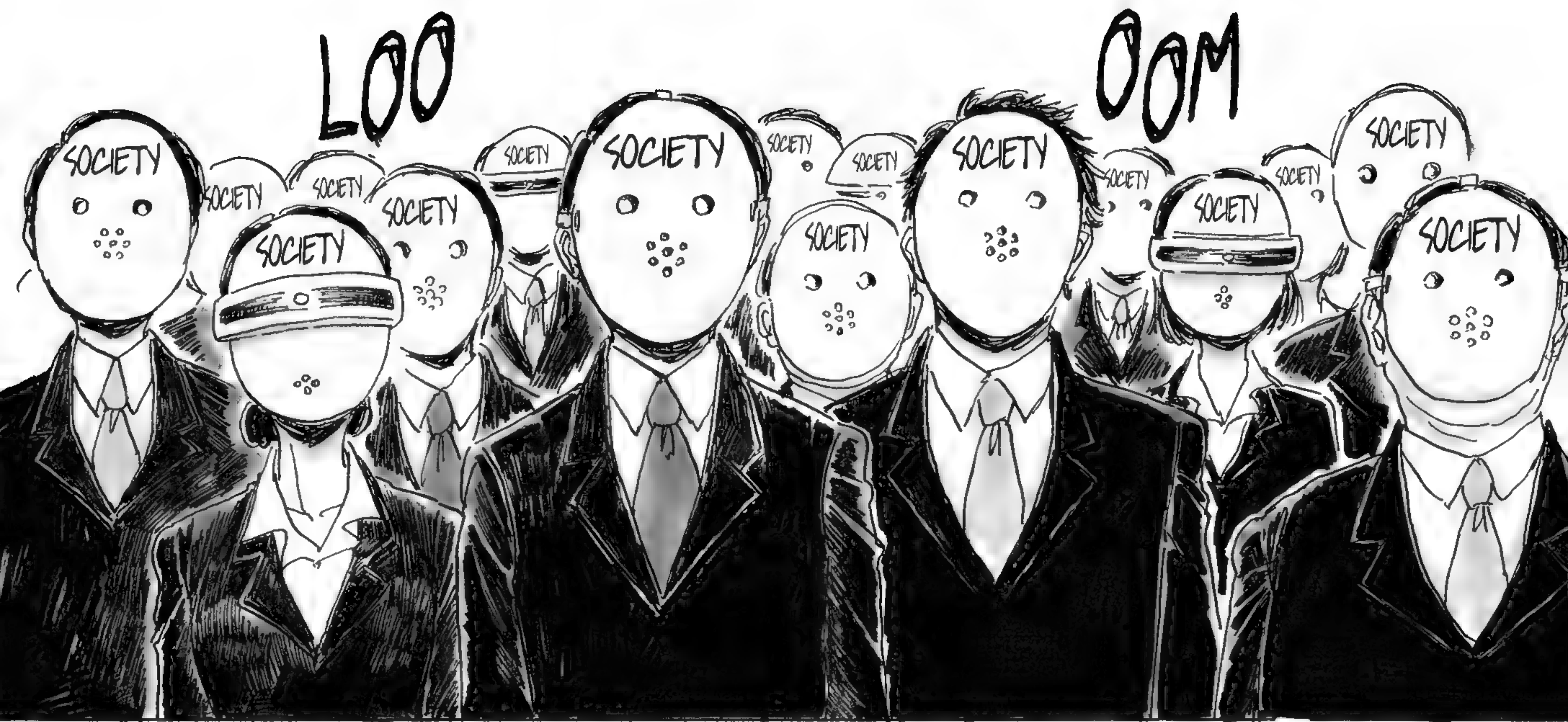


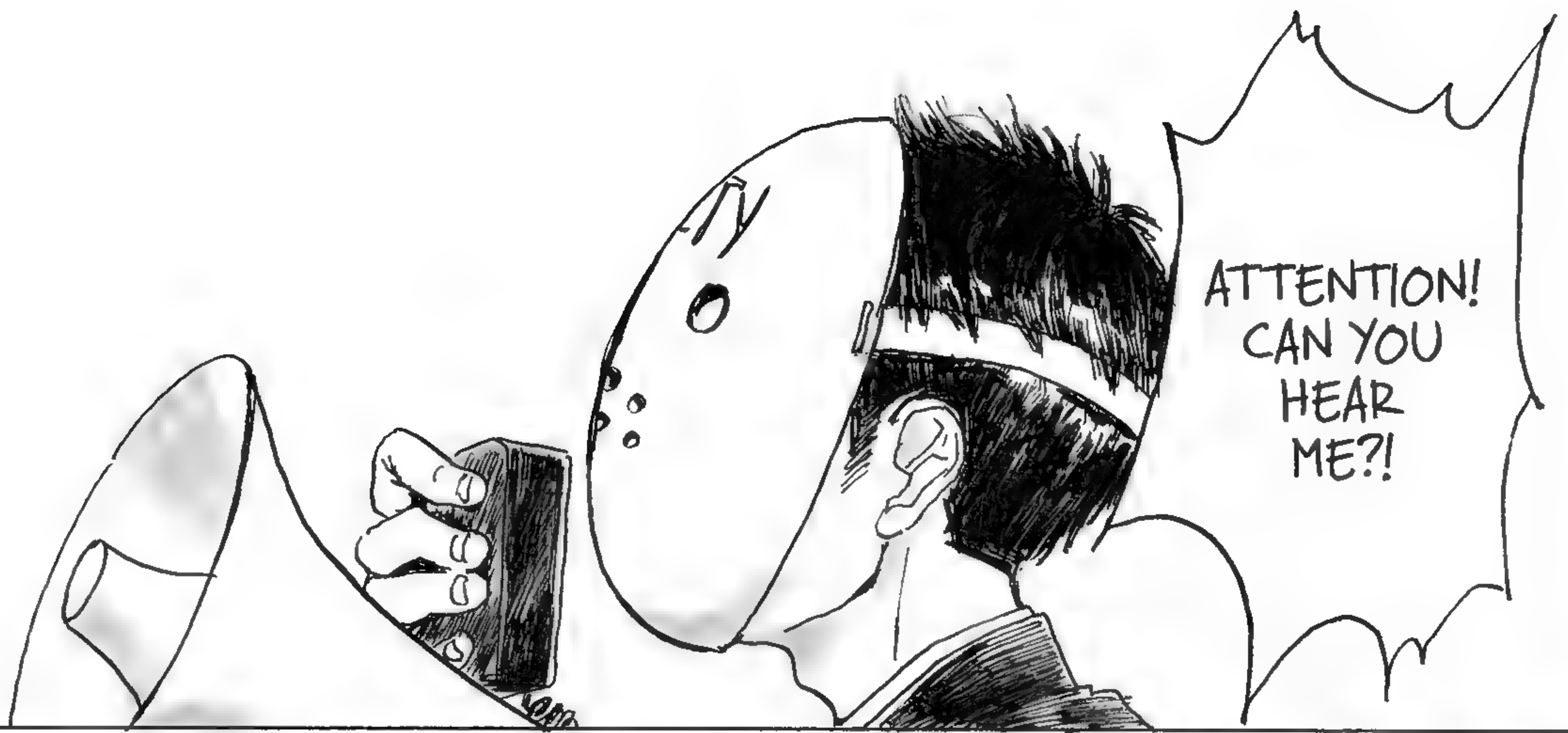
YEAH... I KNOW.

BUT IT'S OKAY. I WON'T DIE.

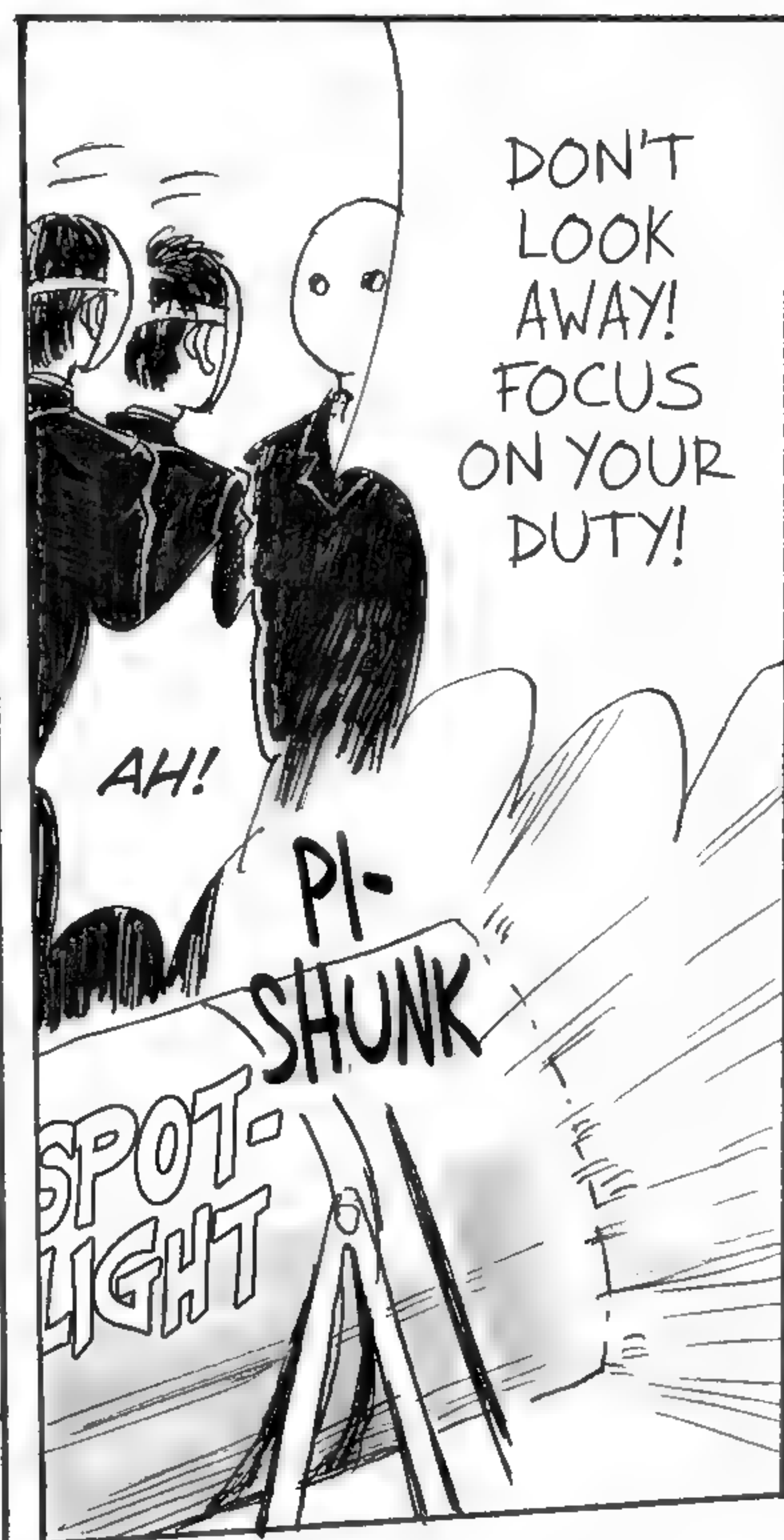


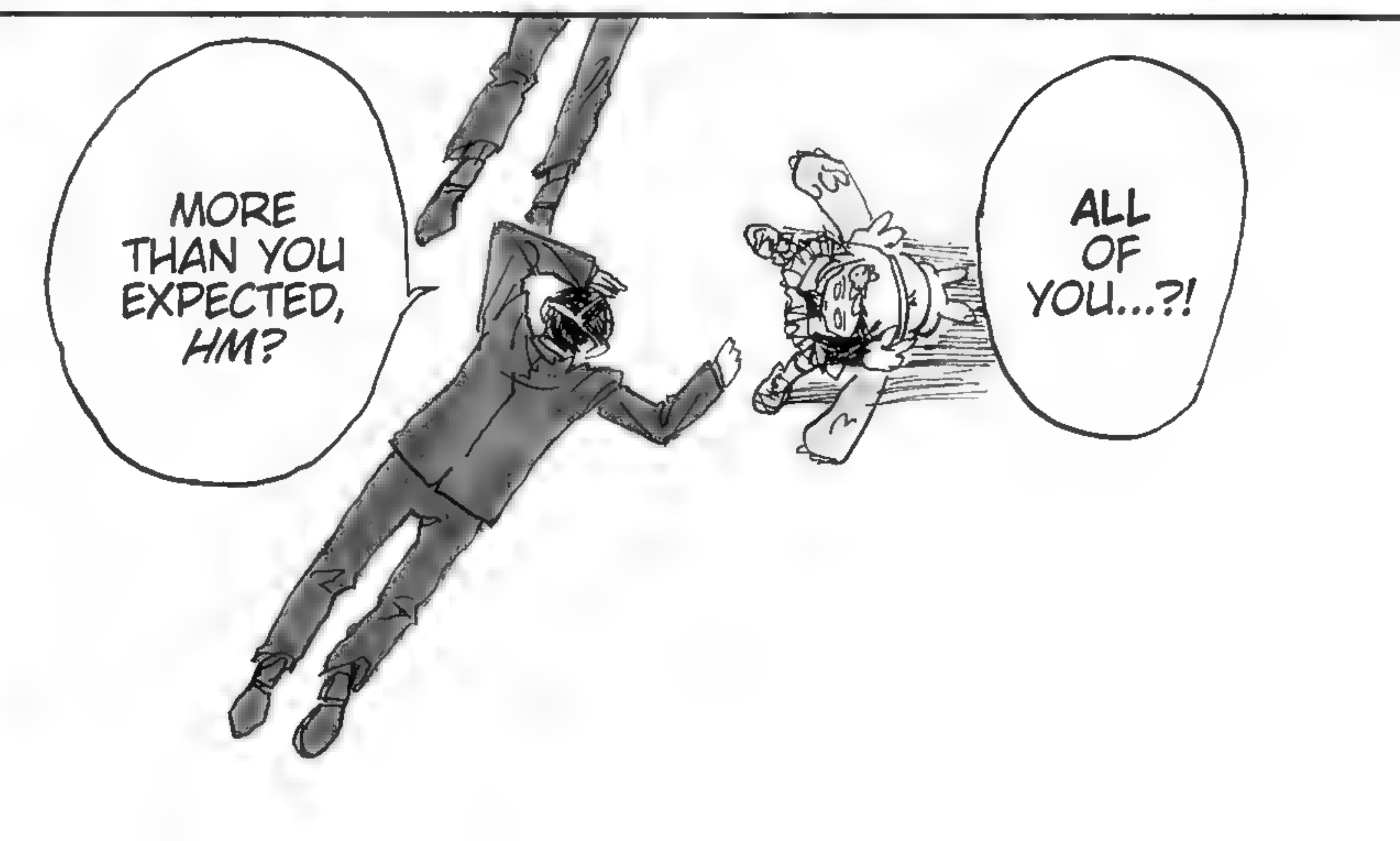
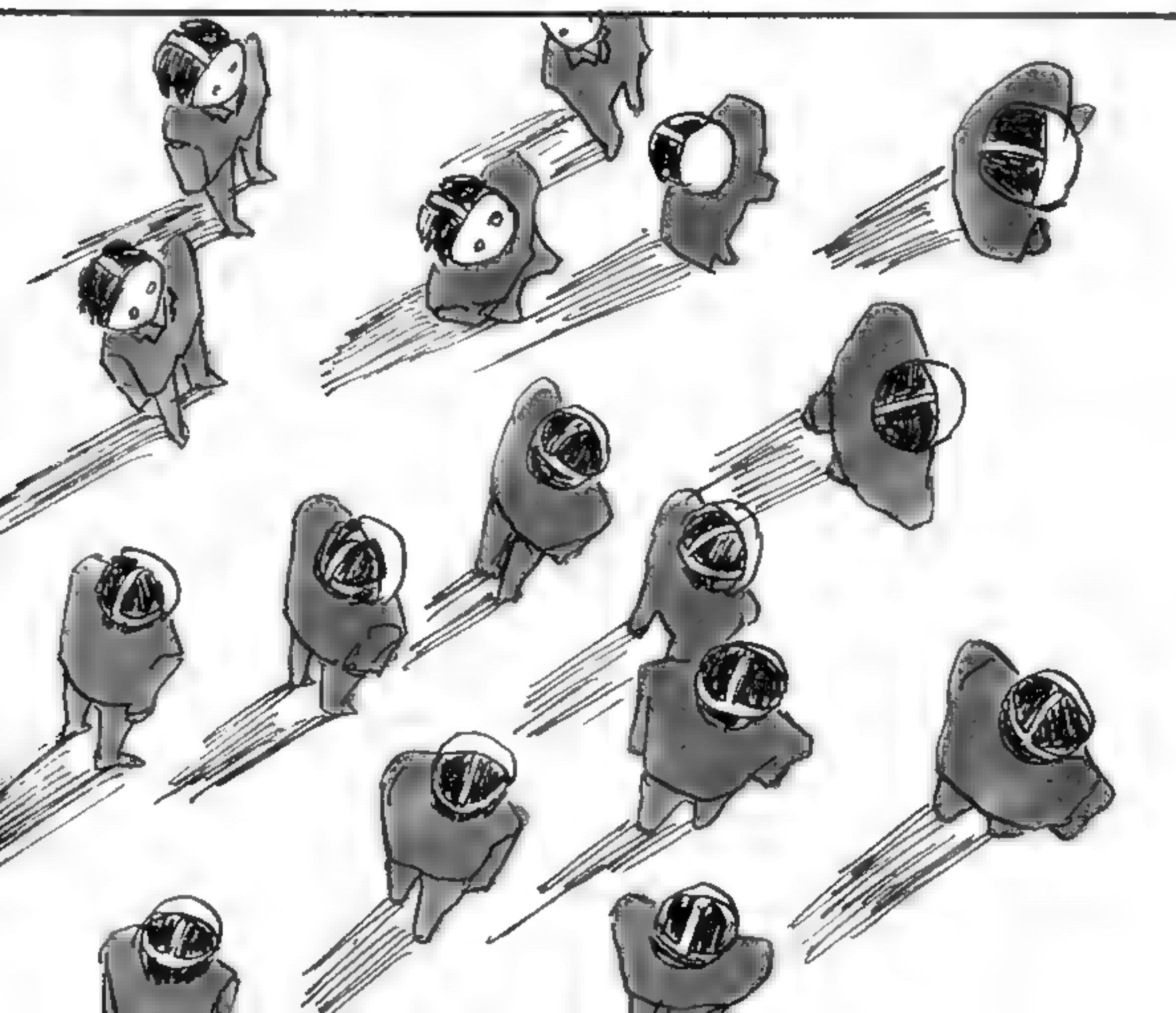


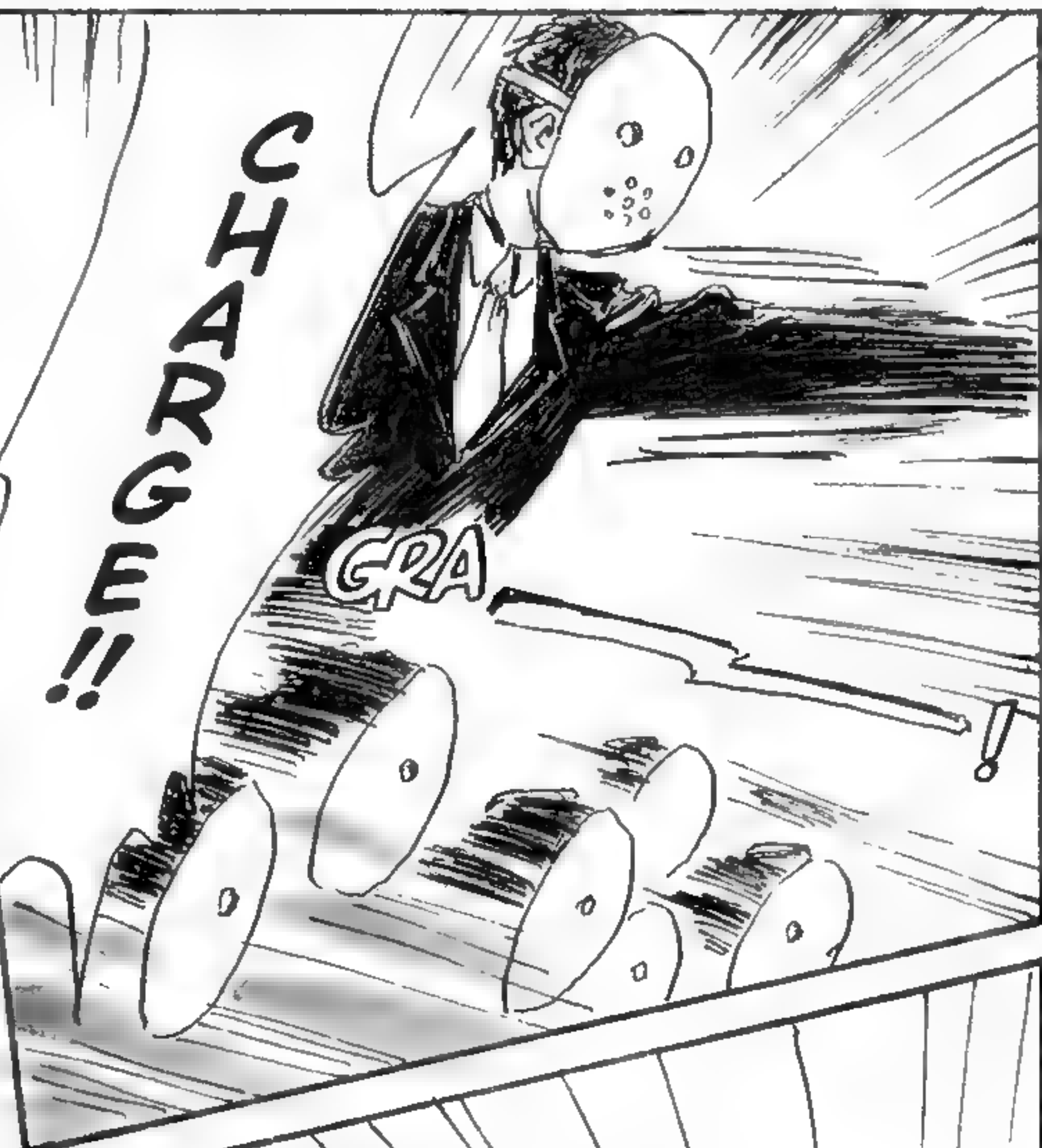
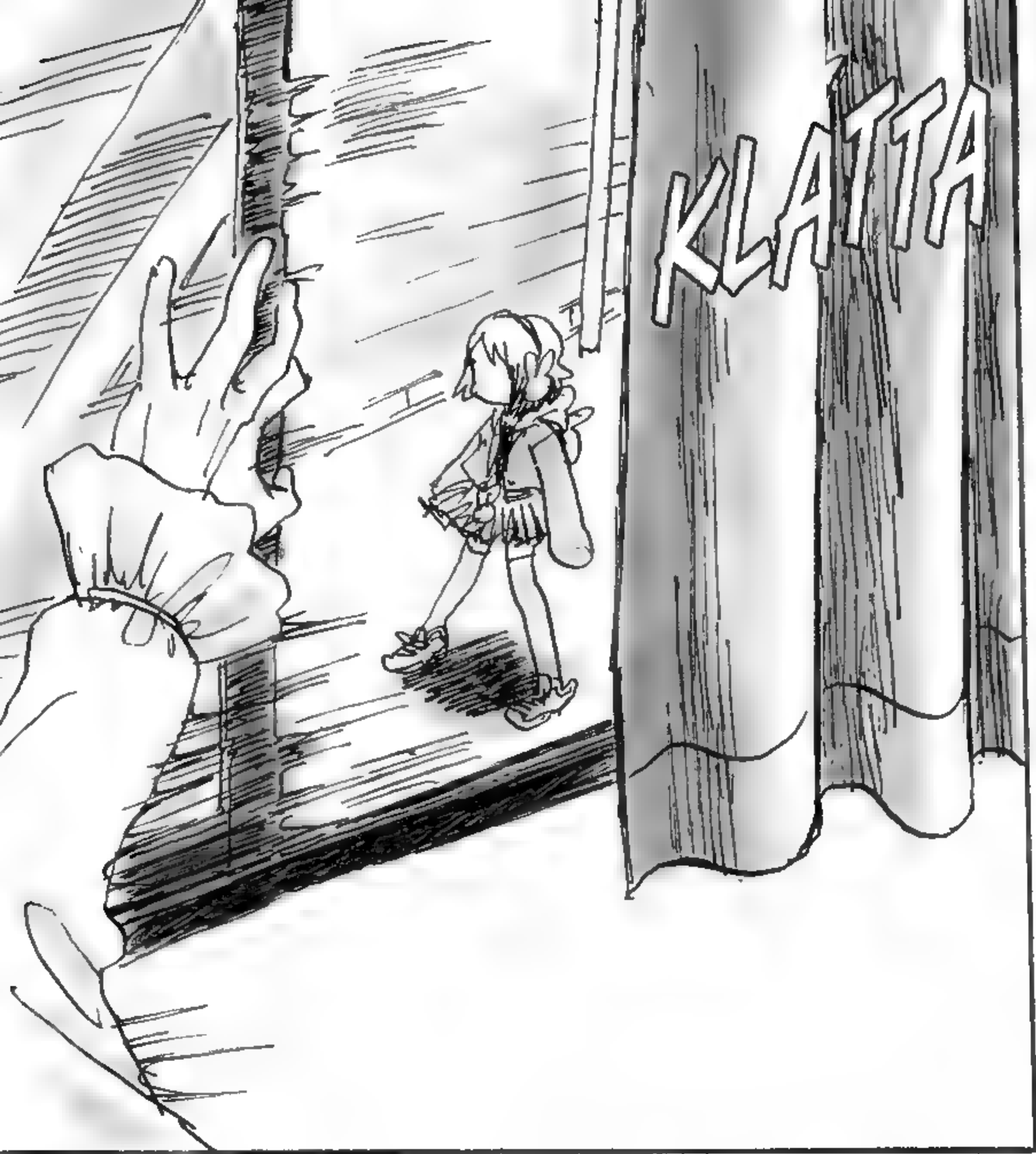


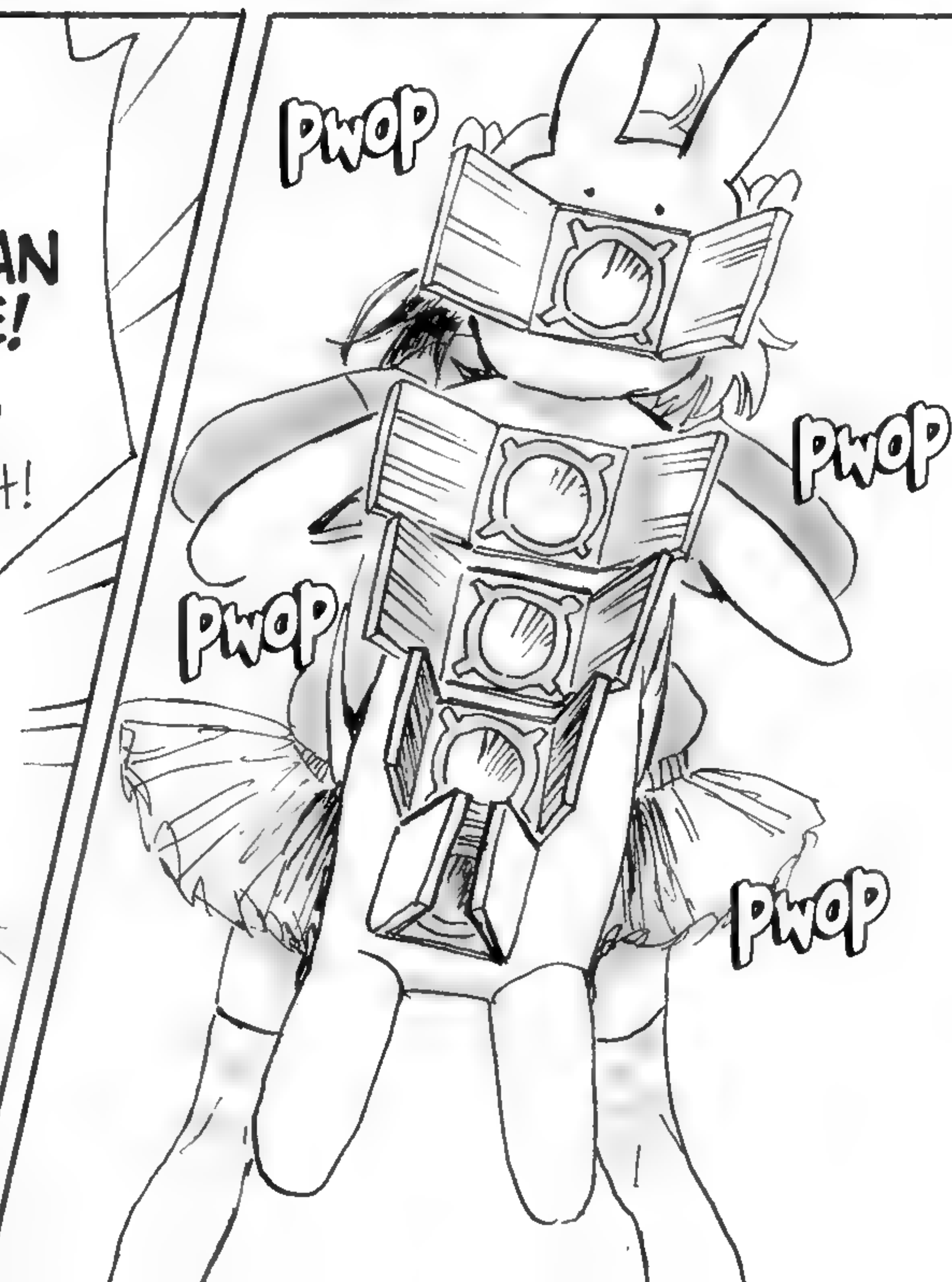






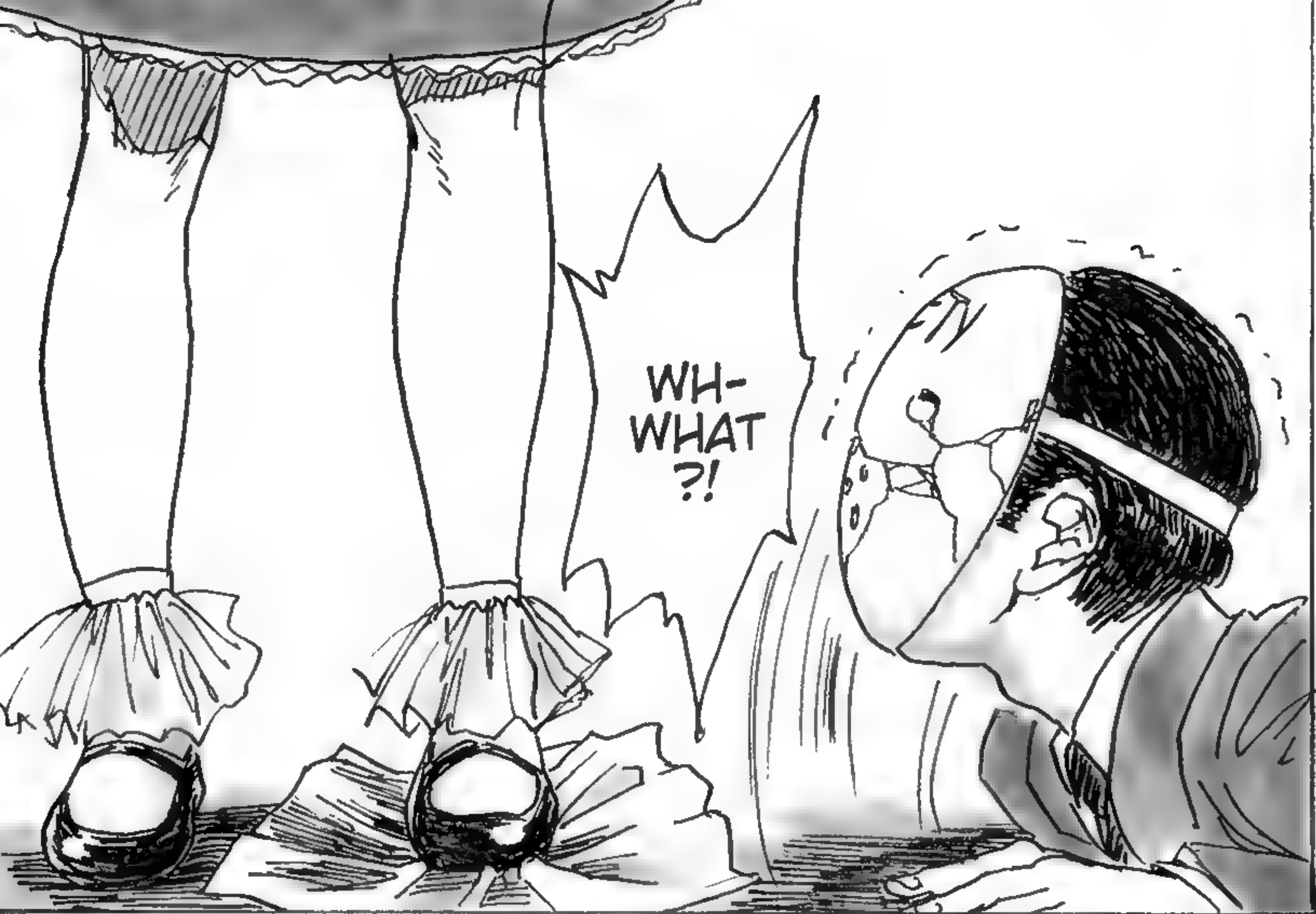


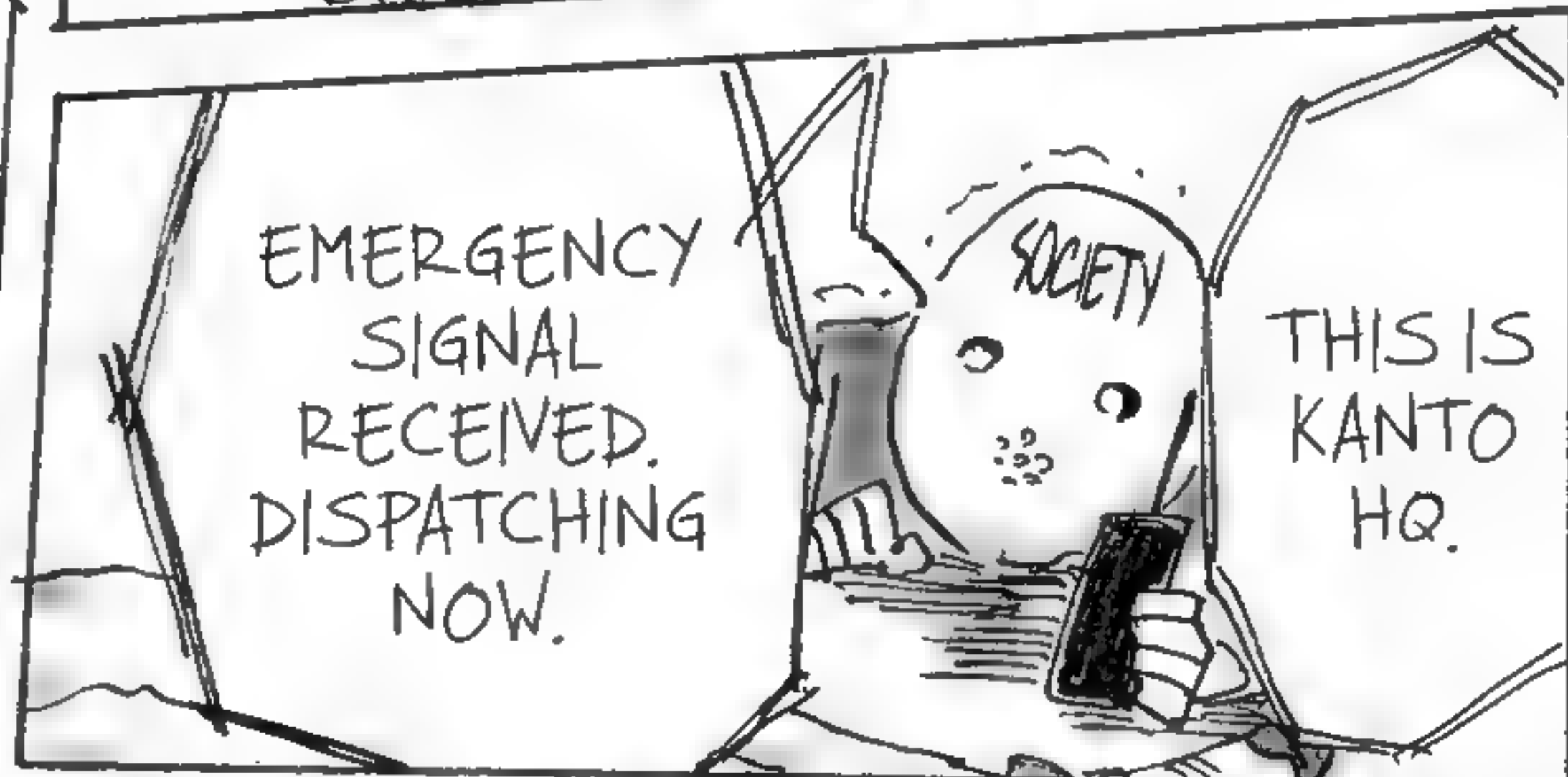
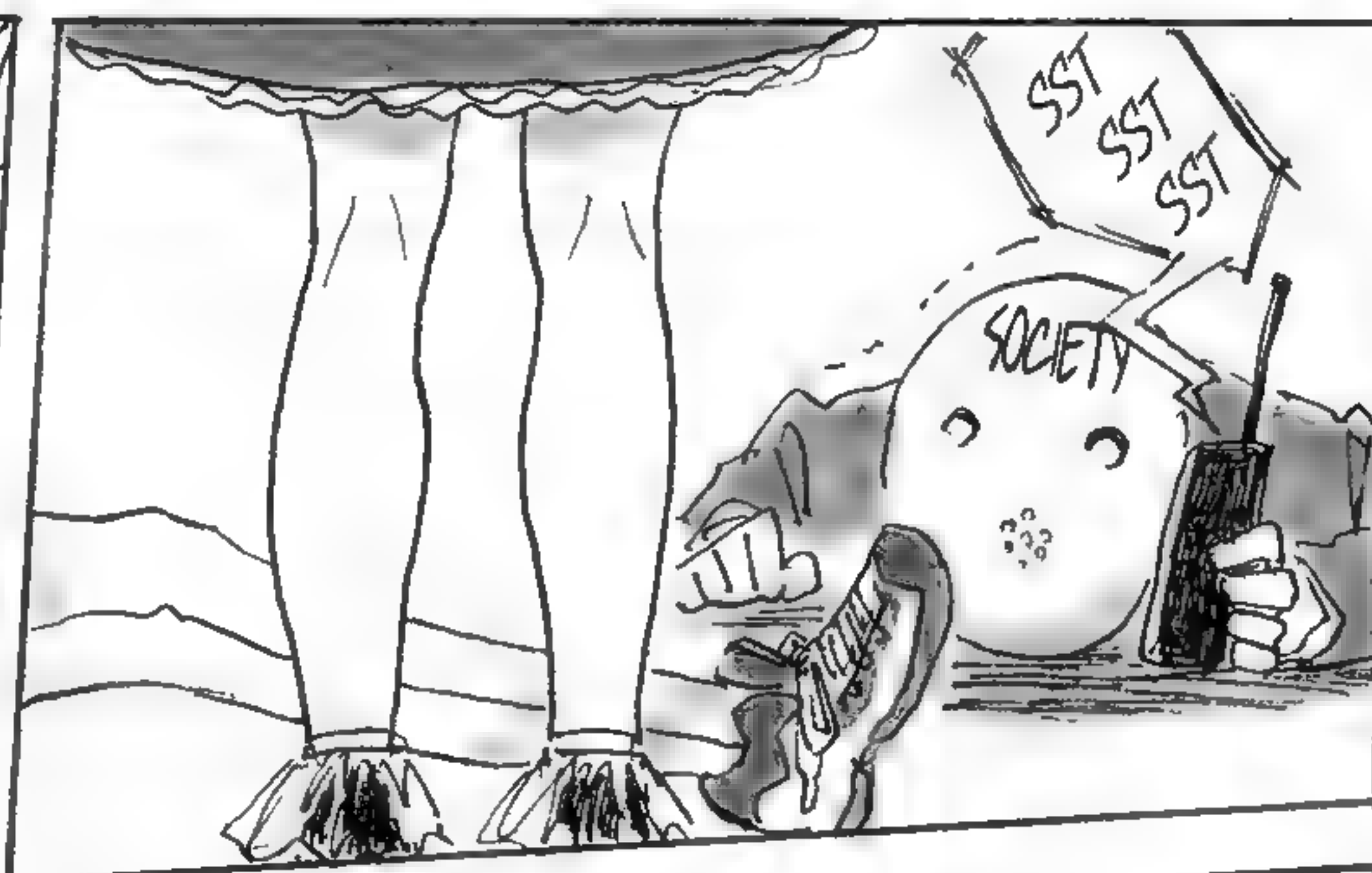
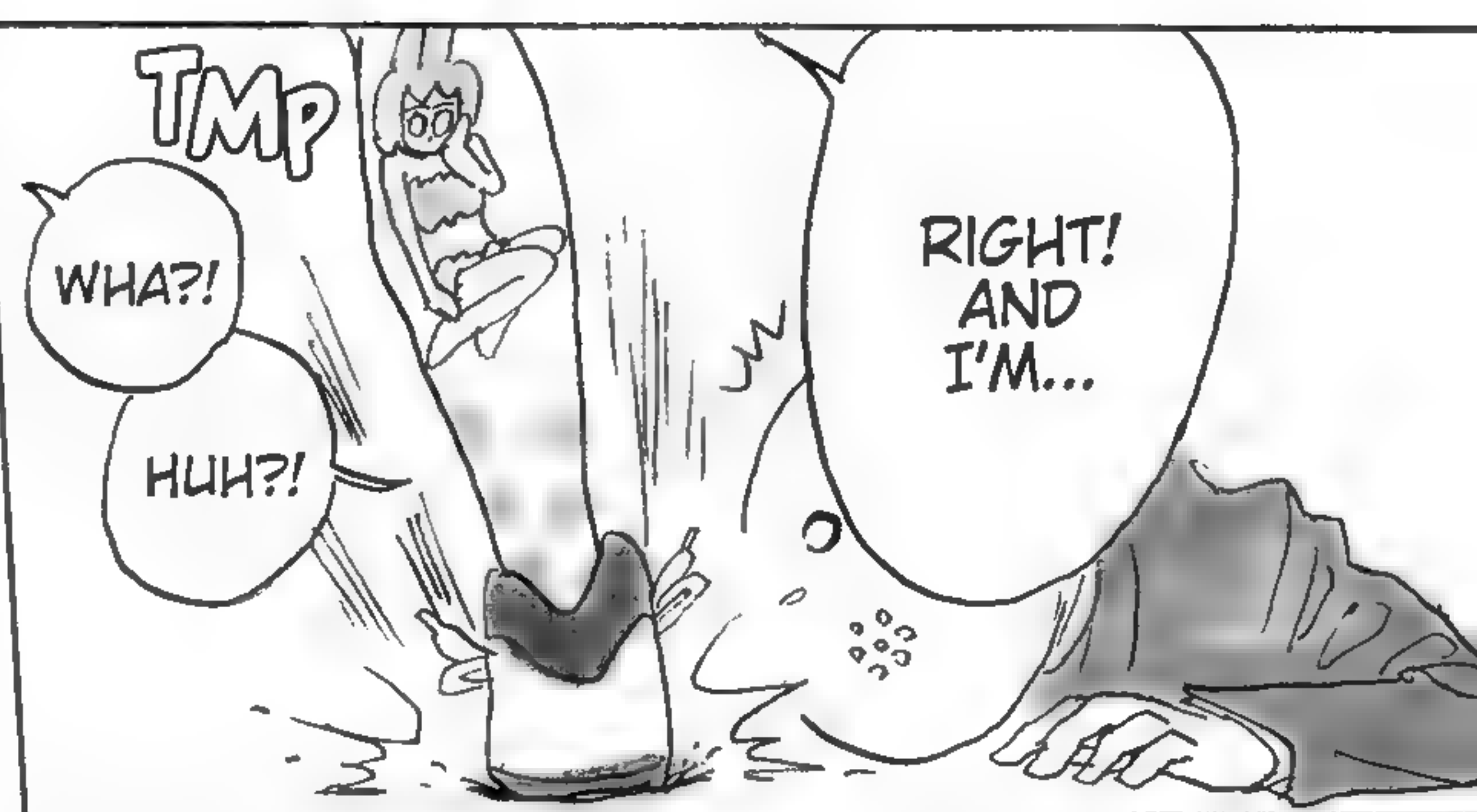


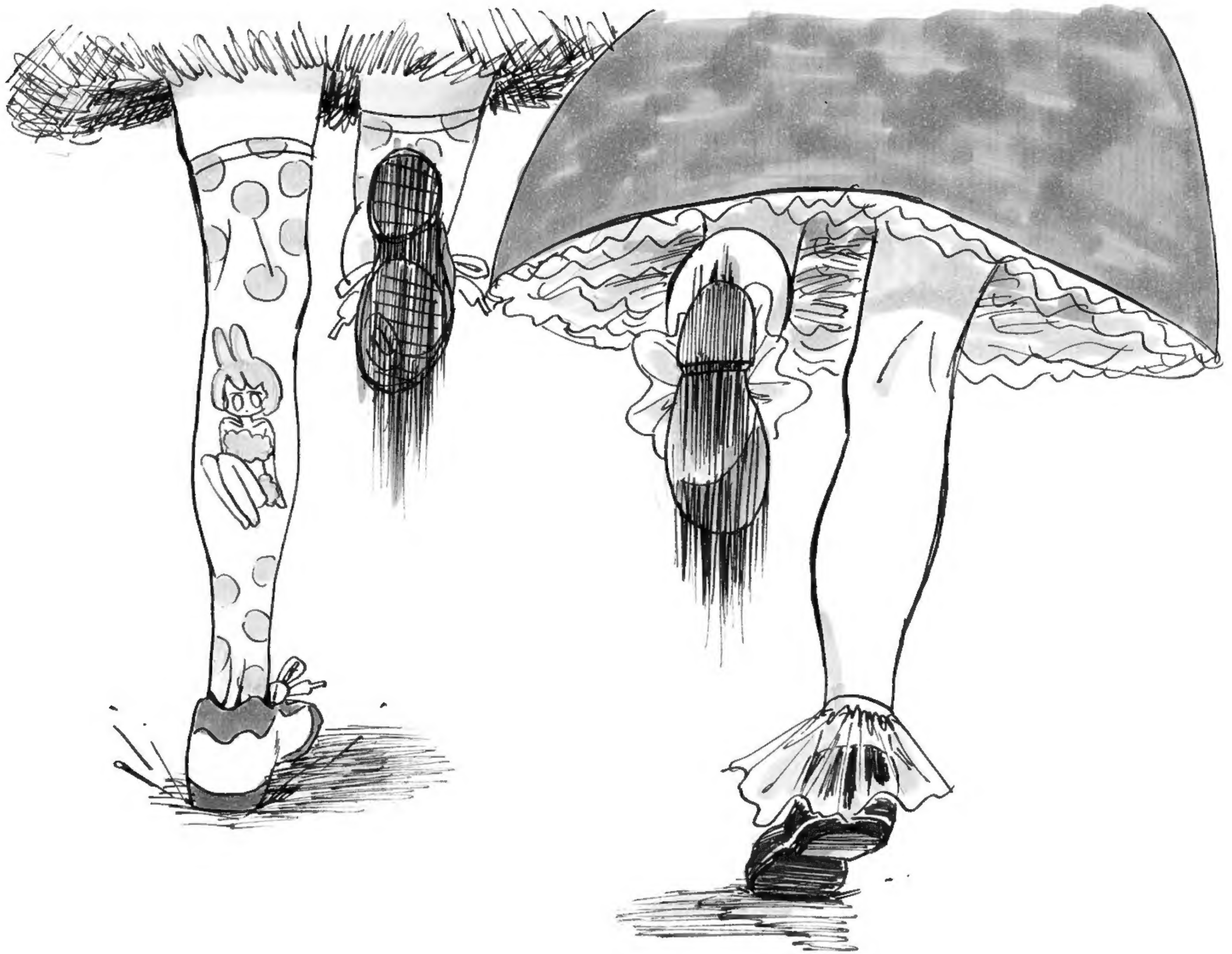












BUT THESE
SOUNDS
ARE THE
MANTRA
THAT WILL
SET ME
FREE.

My
Solo
Exchange
Diary 2

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

My Solo Exchange Diary^{Volume 2}

(true) story & art by **NAGATA KABI**

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ADAPTATION
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HITORI KOKAN NIKKI VOL.2

by Nagata Kabi

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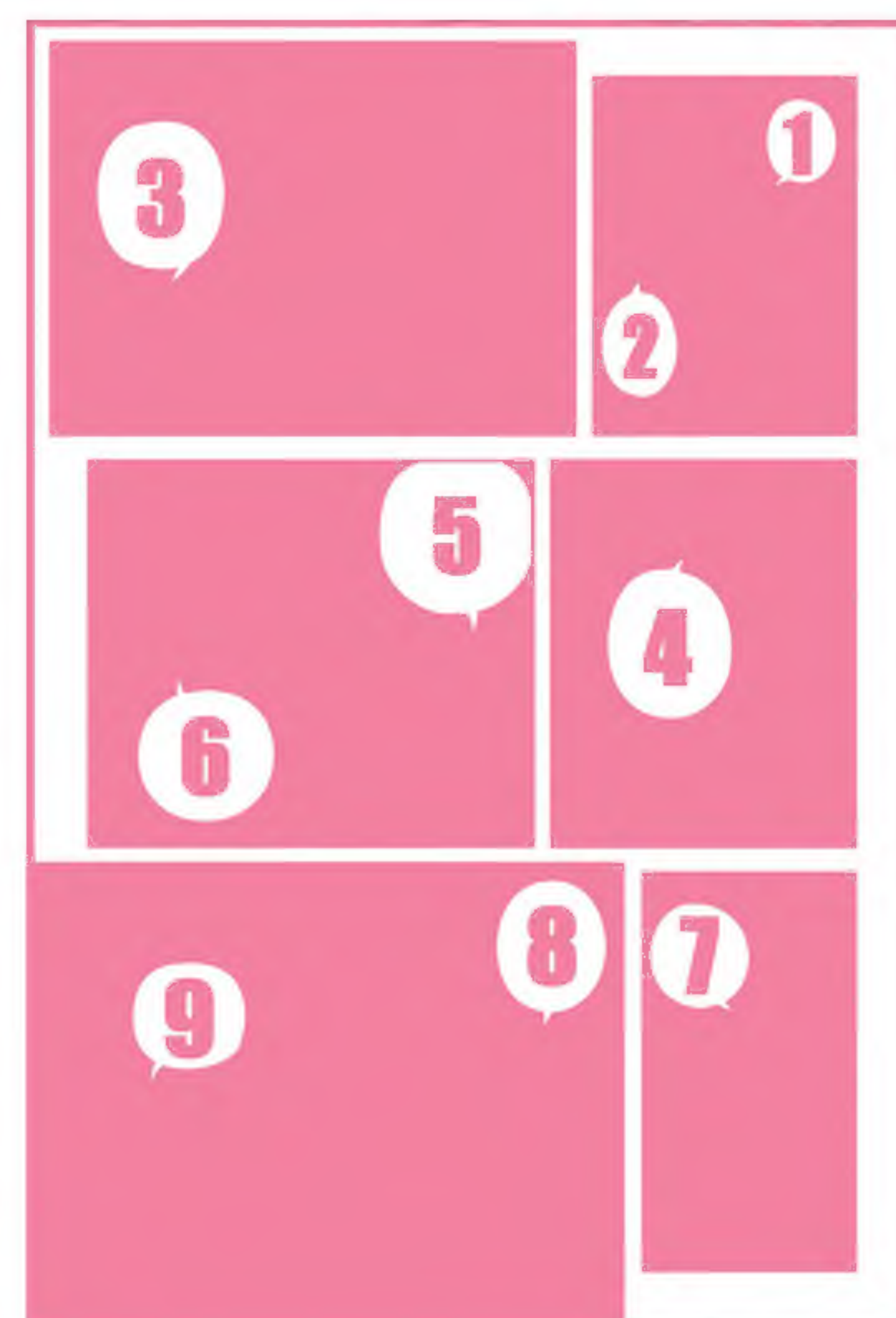
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



"[...] readers who devoured *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* need to pick up this volume, if for no other reason than to know it's that happiness is a never-ending battle for many, but there are always reasons to keep putting up the good fight." —*Anime News Network*



Living on her own is harder than Nagata Kabi expected. Building relationships is difficult too, but with a new friendship to cultivate and a new perspective on her family, she's doing her best to open up and become a warm, compassionate person!

OLDER TEEN

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